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Son of 'El Pinoy Matador' working on film remake

■ BUSINESS / B1

PLDT, Piltel surprise markets with record profits

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DepEd advisory: Classes on all levels resume today in Metro Manila

■ WORLD / A7

Thai opposition parties consider election boycott

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Militants show how to beat proclamation

YUNG MGA STREAMERS IPATAHING POLO SHIRTS!

By Blanche S. Rivera

MILITANT LEADERS YESTERDAY offered "creative ways" of openly defying President Macapagal-Arroyo's Proclamation No. 1017 placing the country under a state of emergency.

"We survived 1081,

MILITANTS/ A6

Senators urge media to defy gov't control

By Philip C. Tubeza, TJ Burgonio, Luige A. del Puerto and Leila Salaverria

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO CAME UNDER fire in the Senate yesterday for allegedly attempting to muzzle the media as a prelude to an assault on basic civil liberties.

Sen. Joker Arroyo urged the media to oppose administration efforts to control the press. "Defy the government . . . continue publishing," he told reporters.

SENATORS/ A13

GMA cracks down on Left, Right foes

Party-list solon nabbed; 4 others in House custody

By Michael Lim Ubac and Luige A. del Puerto

SHRUGGING OFF threats of arrest, four leftist lawmakers strode into the halls of Congress yesterday and declared that it was an honor to be on President Macapagal-Arroyo's "enemies list."

Spurred by Ms Arroyo's proclamation of a state of national emergency on Friday, police also placed under house arrest Chief Supt. Marcelino Franco, the sacked chief of the Special Action Force, and put three other police officers under "restrictive custody."

The lawmakers were among 16 people against whom police had filed charges of rebellion in connection with their alleged involvement in a plot to overthrow Ms Arroyo. *(See related story on Page A6.)*

Police did not arrest the militant legislators, but after negotiating with Speaker Jose de Venecia, they agreed that the top House leader would have custody of them within the confines of the Batasang Pambansa.

The arrangement would last pending the outcome of a formal investigation of the charges of rebellion and coup d'etat filed against them.

Half a dozen policemen were around when party-list Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño, Rafael Mariano and Lisa Maza of Gabriela showed up to attend the session.

Another party-list congressman, Joel Virador, was not as lucky. He was at the Philippine Airlines ticketing office in Davao City when police agents grabbed and handcuffed him after he resisted arrest.

De Venecia said the lawmakers would be "under detention and custody of the House sergeant at arms and PNP security force here in the House. So they will be under detention. No one is above the law."

A sixth congressman, Crispin

GMA CRACKS DOWN/ A6

AMID threats of government arrest, militant party-list Representatives (from left) Satur Ocampo, Rafael Mariano, Lisa Maza and Teodoro Casiño raise their fists upon arrival at the House of Representatives yesterday. ERIK ARAZAS

Cabinet split on ending state of emergency

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

CABINET OFFICIALS ARE SPLIT ON THE lifting of Proclamation No. 1017, with the security cluster remaining cool to a proposal by economic managers to rescind as soon as possible the state of national emergency that President Macapagal-Arroyo declared on Friday because of an alleged coup plot.

The announcement by Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in a statement yesterday that "the state of emergency will remain until such time that we are sure that the threats are contained" indicated that Ms Arroyo was heeding the advice of military and defense officials.

"I believe the public will understand that the lifting of PP 1017 will be slightly delayed," Bunye said on radio, referring to the emergency declaration.

Issuing her emergency declaration on Friday, Ms Arroyo spoke of a "tactical alliance" between right-wing and communist forces to oust her and "create an unconstitutional regime."

Two officers from elite security units in the country's influential military were detained. On Saturday, police arrested an opposition congressman and a retired general, and raided a newspaper office. More persons were arrested yesterday.

Trade Secretary Peter Favila said the economic managers had requested a one-on-one briefing with the Cabinet security cluster last night to enlighten the group on the extent of the threat against the administration.

"We told them (security cluster) to give us the real situation because we want to lift it since the markets have normalized," Favila said at a briefing in Malacañang.

"We're asking, 'What else is there?' But

CABINET / A13

Markets upbeat nat'l emergency rule lifted soon

By Doris C. Dumlao and Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PHILIPPINE SHARES ROSE AND the peso strengthened yesterday as investors voiced confidence that President Macapagal-Arroyo would heed the recommendation of her economic advisers and lift emergency rule.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index rose 19.43 points, or 0.9 percent, to 2,089.36, its highest level for the session. The blue chip index fell 1.1 percent on Friday after Ms Arroyo declared a state of national emergency to quell an alleged coup plot and civil unrest.

At the Philippine Dealing System, the peso finished at 51.96 against the US dollar. The local currency opened at its intra-day low but later hit a hit a high of 51. 95. It crashed into the 52 level on Friday when Ms Arroyo issued her controversial Proclamation No. 1017.

In a televised round-table discussion with three Cabinet officials, Ms Arroyo attributed the favorable reaction of the financial markets to the swift decisive way that the military brass resolved the six-hour standoff Sunday between disgruntled Marines and government forces in Fort Bonifacio.

PCCI Securities president Francisco Liboro said investors

MARKETS/ A13

PETITIONS FILED IN SC

Groups question Proclamation No. 1017

By Armand N. Nocum and Philip C. Tubeza

THE LEGALITY OF PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's proclamation of a state of emergency was challenged in the Supreme Court yesterday as a "subterfuge to avoid the constitutional requirements for the imposition of martial law."

Two groups, made up mostly of educators and lawyers, filed separate petitions assailing Presidential Proclamation No. 1017 and asking the high court to issue a temporary restraining order. *(See related story on Page A2.)*

One group led by Randy David, a University of the Philippines professor, said PP 1017 and its implementing guidelines, General Order No. 5, placed the country under a "de facto state of martial law without complying with the mandated constitutional requirements and in contravention of the constitutionally set safeguards."

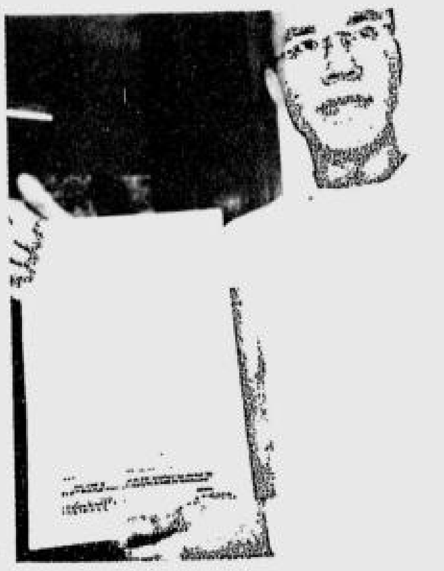
Other petitioners were Lorenzo Tañada III, lawyer Harry Roque, Joel Butuyan, Roger Rayel, Gary Mallari, Romel Bagares and Christopher Bolastig.

The other petition was lodged by 17 law groups under the Alternative Law Groups Inc. (Algi).

In her capacity as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, Ms Arroyo was named one of the respondents.

The other respondents were Executive Secretary Eduardo Er-

GROUPS/ A4



LAWYER Marlon Manuel, spokesperson of the Alternative Law Groups Inc., files in the Supreme Court a petition challenging the legality of Presidential Proclamation No. 1017. REM ZAMORA

RAFFY LERMA

MARINE Col. Ariel Querubin, who was allegedly linked to coup plotters, protests the relief of his commander, Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda, at a press conference in Fort Bonifacio.

Military still restive, says Biazon

By TJ Burgonio and Christine O. Avendaño

WHILE IT ENDED PEACEFULLY, THE six-hour standoff at Marine headquarters in Fort Bonifacio on Sunday did not quash the restiveness in the military, Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said yesterday.

"I don't know if the sentiments have been placated. A lot will depend on how those who were identified as raising the possibility of withdrawal of support will be treated," Biazon said at a briefing.

The standoff stemmed from the protest staged by a group of Marines against the relief of their commandant, Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda.

Biazon said nobody knew the extent of the restiveness. "Not even the chief of staff knows that. Not even the President knows that ... the extent and the depth of this kind. It's boiling inside."

Biazon, a Marine who once served as AFP chief of staff, was among the first to rush to the Marine headquarters on Sunday to pacify the restive troops and prevent a confrontation with their comrades.

A day after the standoff, President Macapagal-Arroyo appeared on national television, thanking authorities for their handling of the problem and warning destabilizers that she would not allow her economic reforms to go to waste.

Despite heavy eye bags, Ms Arroyo was in a good mood and did not dwell much on the recent crisis at a roundtable discussion with some Cabinet officials. She said there was no time for any celebration.

Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz said the government was "over the hump." But he acknowledged that the authorities remained vigilant.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the Palace was thankful the standoff was "peacefully resolved" and that the President was commending the Marines "for acting with a sense of professionalism and for refusing to be used for partisan politics."

The military yesterday received a reminder from the US government to remain "professional and nonpolitical."

"The United States reiterates its call that the government of the Philippines, the Armed Forces and the Filipino people respect fully the rule of law, protect

MILITARY/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Central and Eastern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. Eastern section of Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers.

COMPILED BY JAMIE ALARCON, PDI RESEARCH/02/28/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Second FRONT PAGE
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Puno takes post; plans Erap visit

By Norman Bordadora

ANTIPOLO REP. RONALDO PUNO FORMALLY assumed his post as secretary of interior and local government yesterday, apparently induced to do so by President Macapagal-Arroyo's proclamation of a state of national emergency.

"In the next few days, we would be involved in stabilizing and cleaning-up efforts," Puno told DILG executives and officials of the Philippine National Police in a meeting at Camp Crame hours after taking his oath before Ms Arroyo in Malacañang. "The period of emergency continues. There are still reasons to keep vigilance at a high level."

Up until yesterday, Puno had refused to assume his new position, saying he did not want to relinquish his seat in the House of Representatives before the Commission on Elections had confirmed his appointment to the Cabinet. Puno said he tendered his resignation from the House effective last Friday.

Puno told reporters he planned to visit former President Joseph Estrada, whom he had served as interior secretary prior to his 2001 ouster, to broker a better understanding between the administration the deposed leader, who has been implicated in an alleged right-leftist plot to topple Ms Arroyo.

"I intend to pay a visit to former President Estrada to see what his situation is as well as discuss with him other matters," Puno said, adding that he planned to "reach out to members of the opposition so that while we engage in debate, it will be less injurious."

Better understanding

Puno said he intended to bring together his "friends in the opposition" and his colleagues in the administration to come to a better understanding of each other's positions regarding issues of national importance.

"They are really my friends. Perhaps, I can tell them, 'Let's not turn seditious,'" Puno said.

Adressing the DILG and PNP officials, Puno said the PNP was "central to the implementation" of general orders issued in connection with the proclamation of a state of emergency. "And I share in that responsibility," he added.

Safety of republic

"With the crisis over the past week, the DILG takes a different role," Puno said, "There is now an added element of the safety of our republic."

He credited the DILG and its various attached agencies – the PNP, the Bureau of Fire Protection and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology – for maintaining peace and order over the weekend, including Sunday's standoff involving the Marines in Fort Bonifacio.

"The stock market went up. If it had not been for the action of the DILG, the result would have been radically different," Puno said.

Meeting with reporters briefly after the swearing-in ceremony, Puno said that while the times called for understanding and reprisal, "in the wake of things that are happening, we should place responsibility where it belongs."

"We appeal to everybody to be calm, not to get too excited about something that they don't entirely understand," he said.

Puno said the situation remained abnormal and the state of emergency would continue. He said more arrests would probably be made and more charges filed. *(See stories on Page A1)*

He said the duration of the state of emergency would depend "on how the situation develops."

Be on guard

Puno said that civil liberties would be respected but warned citizens, including the media, to be on guard against "potentially seditious acts."

"Expression is not necessarily seditious," Puno said.

As for the raid on the Daily Tribune, Puno said he had been informed that the newspaper may have committed seditious acts through its published articles.

Asked if charges would be filed against the Tribune's editors, Puno said: "You take it from there. (It) may have committed acts that have been interpreted to be seditious."

EMERGENCY? President Macapagal-Arroyo and (from left) Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz, Finance Secretary Gary Teves, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla share a light moment on their way to a roundtable discussion with other members of the Cabinet in Malacañang. LYN RILLON

Estrada back in Tanay after eye surgery

By Nelson F. Flores

FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA flew by helicopter back to detention at his rest house in Tanay, Rizal, yesterday, two days after undergoing surgery to remove two cysts in his left eye.

Unlike his stay at the San Juan Medical Center, where an irate Estrada resisted a police attempt to move him back to Tanay as the authorities thwarted an alleged coup attempt in the wee hours of Friday, the ousted leader's return to Tanay was uneventful, Sandiganbayan Sheriff Ed Urieta said.

Urieta said the 68-year-old Estrada was returned to his sprawling rest house shortly before 4 p.m. aboard a helicopter owned by the family of his son-in-law Beaver Lopez. From the hospital, Estrada was brought by his police escorts to the Crisanta Tower on Ortigas Avenue where the helicopter was waiting.

Ophthalmologist Dr. Amadeo Veloso of the Asian Eye Institute pronounced Estrada fit to be released from the hospital after an examination yesterday morning.

"So far, his condition is very good," Hocson said. "Although there is still a slight swelling in his left eye, that is due to the recent operation. The discharge was Dr. Veloso's call. He said President Estrada can go back to Tanay."

Hocson said Estrada may have had the cysts for as long as eight years.

Surgeons discovered the cysts two weeks ago when Estrada underwent treatment at the hospital for an eye infection and removal of excess skin from his drooping eyelids. The doctors, however, decided not to remove the cysts at the time because of the infection.

But four days ago, Estrada complained of pain in his eyes, and the Sandiganbayan, which is trying the former President on charges of plunder and perjury, granted him another medical furlough.

The operation was originally scheduled for Friday night but the eye surgeon decided to treat the infection first before operating on Estrada on Saturday night.

Tribune seeks high court's intervention

By Armand N. Nocum

THE DAILY TRIBUNE YESTERday asked the Supreme Court to nullify Presidential Proclamation 1017 which placed the country under a state of national emergency.

In a 14-page petition, Ninez Cacho-Olivares, Tribune publisher and editor in chief, through lawyer Rene Saguisag, asked the court to declare the proclamation unconstitutional. *(See story on Page A1)*

On Friday, a police team raided the newspaper's offices in Manila. Also raided were the offices of the tabloids Abante and Abante Tonite in an apparent crackdown by the administration on critical media.

Olivares also asked the high court to direct Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao and Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita to return to the Tribune whatever the raiding policemen may have taken from the paper.

In addition, Olivares asked that the PNP team guarding the Tribune premises be pulled out, saying the policemen adversely affected business.

The Tribune also wants the PNP to "pay damages in a proper case by reason of their wrongful and cavalier acts."

"It is respectfully prayed that Proclamation 1017 be declared unconstitutional on its face or as applied to petitioners in the specific context of this case. Meantime, before the matter is heard on notice, that a preliminary injunction issued directing that respondents not to take over petitioners publication, nor require them to have a liaison, nor presume to review what they will publish and, after hearing, making the prohibition permanent," the petition said.

Olivares said that since a law could not abridge the freedom of the press, it should follow that a proclamation of state of emergency could not abridge such freedom.

She also observed that the reason for which PP 1017 was issued seemed to have dissipated.

"The administration, assuming it is the State, crows how well it is doing economically. There is therefore absolutely no emergency as contemplated in the Constitution on national economy and patrimony. There is no bread line, or gasoline queue, or the like, that would remotely justify closing or controlling any newspaper. This is censorship at its worst," Olivares said.

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Notices of non-compliance for the first compliance period of the MCLE are now being sent out by the MCLE committee.

The deadline for the second compliance period of the MCLE is fast approaching.

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Date	Credit Units/Subject Per Bar Matter 850	Lecturer
☐ Mar. 18 a.m.	2/International Law	Prof. Harry H.L. Roque, Jr.
	2/Legal Writing and Oral Advocacy	Justice Magdangal M. De Leon
☐ Mar. 18 p.m.	3/Updates in Substantive and Procedural Laws and Jurisprudence: SRC and Corporate Governance	SEC Director Justina F. Callangan
	2/Trial and Pre-Trial Skills	Justice Edilberto G. Sandoval
☐ Mar. 25 a.m.	2/MCLE Prescribed Subjects: Technology and the Law	Atty. Ivan John E. Uy
	2/Legal Ethics	Justice Jose L. Sabio Jr.
☐ Mar. 25 p.m.	2/Updates in Substantive and Procedural Laws and Jurisprudence: Constitutional Law	Prof. Harry H.L. Roque, Jr.
	3/Alternative Dispute Resolution	Dean Custodio O. Parlade
☐ Apr. 01 a.m.	2/Alternative Dispute Resolution	Justice Froilan M. Bacungan
	2/Trial and Pre-trial Skills	Justice Lucas P. Bersamin
☐ Apr. 01 p.m.	2/MCLE Prescribed Subjects: New Rules and Jurisprudence in Family Law	Atty. Melencio S. Sta. Maria
	2/Legal Ethics	Justice Hilarion L. Aquino
	1/Update in Substantive and Procedural Laws and Jurisprudence: Notarial Law	Justice Hilarion L. Aquino
☐ Apr. 08 a.m.	2/MCLE Prescribed Subjects: Forensic Evidence: DNA and its Analysis	Dra. Raquel Del Rosario-Fortun
	2/Legal Ethics	Justice Hector L. Hofileña
☐ Apr. 08 p.m.	2/Legal Writing and Oral Advocacy	Justice Ruben T. Reyes
	3/Updates in Substantive and Procedural Laws and Jurisprudence: Criminal Law	Justice Diosdado M. Peralta

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Classes resume today

CLASSES ARE TO resume today in both public and private schools and at all levels in the National Capital Region, the Department of Education announced yesterday.

DepEd Officer-in-Charge Fe Hidalgo said classes, suspended after President Macapagal-Arroyo proclaimed a state of national emergency last Friday, were to have resumed yesterday but she decided to hold back for one more day in light of Sunday's standoff at Fort Bonifacio.

Schools closed also in certain areas in Bulacan and classes there will also resume today, Hidalgo said.

Hidalgo advised parents and students to consult DepEd's DText Program by typing their inquiries on their cell phones and sending the messages including their names, regions and provinces to 2622. They can also call the DepEd at 636-1663.

Alcuin Papa

US state dept. official arriving for 3-day visit

AMBASSADOR CHRISTOPHER R. Hill, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, arrives in Manila today on a three-day official visit, his first to the country since assuming his current post in 2005.

The US Embassy said that apart from meeting with officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs and other government agencies, Hill will attend meetings of the Asean Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Support Group on Confidence-Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy.

Hill assumed his responsibilities as assistant secretary of state in April 2005. He has served as ambassador to South Korea, Poland and Macedonia. He serves as the head of the US delegation to the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear issue, and is the US state department's most senior official on East Asian and Pacific affairs.

Earlier in his foreign service career, Hill served tours in Belgrade, Warsaw, Seoul and Tirana, and was on the Department of State's policy planning staff and in its Operation Center.

PDI columnist was 59

SOLEDAD "CHIC" FORTICH, WHO WAS BLIND BUT who used to write a column for the Philippine Daily Inquirer called "Out of Sight," died on Feb. 26 in her hometown Cagayan de Oro City after suffering cardiac arrest. She was 59.

Fortich was a founder and officer of the Philippine Blind Union and was active in helping the visually impaired.

Her remains lie at the Greenhills Memorial Homes in Cagayan de Oro and will be laid to rest on Wednesday at the Greenhills Memorial Park.

Landslide rescue focuses on orphans

By Volt Contreras, Nikko Dizon

A NEW RESCUE MISSION IS TAKING shape in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte, site of a horrendous mudslide that engulfed Barangay Guinsaugon on Feb. 17.

Rescuers called off the search for survivors on Saturday but have turned to a different kind of rescue: To protect from human traffickers the approximately 200 children who survived the disaster, of whom about 40 were confirmed to have lost both parents.

The United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) yesterday said it had briefed all volunteers, social workers and local government officials engaged in the relief operations to be on guard against syndicates reported to be targeting the children.

Long before the disaster, Southern Leyte had been a "known hot spot" for trafficking of children and illegal recruitment, often for prostitution, pornography, forced labor, marriage and illegal adoption, the Unicef office in Manila said.

Unicef said it received information that unidentified persons had appeared near Guinsaugon asking if any children needed to be adopted.

It also said that a local nongovernment organization, Visayan Forum, had confirmed 25 cases of trafficking of children and adults in the immediate vicinity of the landslide.

Officials were documenting "unaccompanied children" from Guinsaugon as a precautionary measure, it said.

Also yesterday, a Taiwanese official who took part in the multinational rescue effort said members of the island's rescue team expressed interest in providing long-term assistance for up to 23 orphans from St. Bernard.

The offer, however, had still to be discussed between the municipal government and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Manila, Teco political officer Benjamin Hong said.

The Taiwanese rescuers, set to return home yesterday, were among the first volunteers from the international community to arrive in the country to help in the search and rescue efforts.

Taiwan had also pledged to contribute $100,000 for relief efforts. It also sent 840 kilograms of medical emergency kits that could be used by some 10,000 people for at least three months.

At the Clark Special Economic Zone, US Marine Capt. Burrell Parmer said yesterday the humanitarian mission of the United States military in St. Bernard cost the American government $4 million.

However, Parmer said, the sum was still not near the losses that Barangay Guinsaugon had sustained in the calamity.

Officials said 139 bodies have been recovered from the mudslide and 973 people were missing and feared dead. The Red Cross reported there were about 6,700 evacuees from four Southern Leyte towns, including those who had been moved out before Guinsaugon was engulfed. *With a report from Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

THE 32-MAN search and rescue team from Taiwan lands at Villamor Air Base yesterday on its way home after spending eight days in Guinsaugon, Southern Leyte, helping to search for survivors of the landslide. ROGER MARGALLO

Loren: I don't care to be vice president

By Leila B. Salaverria

FORMER SEN. LOREN LEGARDA said yesterday she did not care if she did not get to sit as Vice President as long as she could prove that cheating attended the 2004 election.

Legarda, whose electoral protest against Vice President Noli de Castro is being heard, said she did not want to belong to the current administration anyway.

"It's not important anymore that I sit as Vice President because I do not want to be part of an illegitimate and corrupt government," she said at the Kapihan sa Manila forum, adding that she knew she had won against De Castro.

Legarda made the statement when asked if she was worried her electoral protest would only be resolved in 2010, when the terms of both De Castro and President Macapagal-Arroyo will end.

The President has been accused of cheating in the 2004 polls, a charge she has continually denied.

The allegation, brought about by the release of wiretapped conversations between herself and an unnamed election official believed to be Virgilio Garcillano, sparked street protests and an impeachment attempt in Congress.

But Legarda said she would continue with her electoral protest before the Supreme Court sitting as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal so that the people would learn the truth about the 2004 election.

"I'm doing this for the search for truth. This is my legacy to the Filipinos," she said.

Legarda and her lawyers, Sixto Brillantes and Rufus Rodriguez, also denied yesterday the reported claim of Romulo Macalintal, Ms Arroyo's and De Castro's lawyer, that no cheating had occurred in Cebu and that his clients had won the election fair and square.

Brillantes said documents in their possession showed the election returns in the custody of the House of Representatives were fraudulent.

He said the serial numbers of the ERs at the House were different from the copies of the ERs that were submitted to the Commission on Elections, the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) and the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

Rodriguez said the ballots from Cebu were fake because these did not have any watermarks when scanned under ultraviolet light.

The ERs and ballots from selected provinces are being examined in light of Legarda's protest.

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We are elated to announce that our senior consultant, Mr Dale Thompson, has recently completed and passed the full membership exam as required by the Canadian Society of Immigration Consultants to represent clients wishing to immigrate to Canada He is currently the only only licensed immigration consultant living in the Philippines authorized by the Government of Canada to represent clients at the Embassy in Manila.

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Tax cases vs Regine, Mendez to be revived

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT IS SET TO FILE TWO separate motions for reconsideration to revive the dismissed tax evasion cases against singer Regine Velasquez and cosmetic surgeon Joel Mendez.

Finance Undersecretary Gaudencio Mendoza Jr. told reporters the Bureau of Internal Revenue and its head agency, the Department of Finance, would continue the tax battle with the two celebrities.

Mendoza said the BIR was preparing the motions for reconsideration to be filed in the next few days with the appropriate judicial bodies.

"[The BIR] was surprised by the dismissal, but definitely motions will be filed. We will continue pursuing the cases" he said.

The Court of Tax Appeals (CTA) dismissed the tax evasion case against Mendez last week, citing insufficiency of evidence that he had violated Republic Act No. 8424 or the Tax Reform Act of 1997.

The court noted that Mendez may have started his cosmetic surgery business in 2001 and registered it with the BIR only in 2002 but the revenue agency had failed to prove that the business had an income in its first year of operation.

The CTA cautioned the BIR against bringing cases to court without sufficient evidence. "This is indeed a very dangerous practice which this Court must surely reject and condemn," it said.

On the other hand, the estimated P4-million tax evasion case against Velasquez was dismissed by the Department of Justice in its early stages. The DOJ said the case was filed in haste and the BIR did not follow due process in making the charge.

"Any shortcut cannot be countenanced. Be it noted that the notice and demand are requirements of due process to which every taxpayer is entitled," the DOJ said.

The BIR alleged that Velasquez failed to declare 50 percent, or 3.75 million, or her income for 2003.

Mendoza denied the BIR was filing cases carelessly, saying it had sufficient evidence against the two.

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Groups question Proclamation No. 1017

UNIVERSITY of the Philippines Prof. Randy David speaks during a news conference in Quezon City. At left is Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros

REUTERS

From page A1

mita, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz II, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga and Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao.

The petitioners said the two edicts infringed on Congress' emergency powers and described them as "a subterfuge to avoid the constitutional requirements for the imposition of martial law or suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus, as well as avoid congressional scrutiny into the President's exercise of martial law powers."

They argued that the "legislative policy embodied in Batas Pambansa Blg. 880 (Public Assembly Act) could not be amended by the President in the guise of a proclamation or a general order."

The petitioners claimed that the President's "no rally policy" contravened the clear language of the statute and impaired the autonomy of local governments.

PP 1017 was an act of grave abuse of discretion on the part of the President, they said, and constituted a "usurpation of constitutional powers properly belonging to the legislative branch of government, as well as a contravention of civil liberties protected under the Constitution."

Writ of injunction urged

The petitioners urged the Supreme Court to "prohibit the President and Commander in Chief, the Department of National Defense, the AFP and the PNP, and their agents and instrumentalities," from implementing the presidential order.

They also asked for the issuance of "a writ of preliminary prohibitory injunction or temporary restraining order" against PP 1017.

For its part, Algi said Proclamation No. 1017 should be "struck down and declared null and void."

"All democratic rights guaranteed and protected under the Constitution are still in place and could not be quelled by the proclamation," lawyer Marlon J. Manuel, Algi executive secretary, said after filing the petition.

"Malacañang, through Proclamation 1017, is the one creating fear to quell legitimate protests against the government. Malacañang could not just go on a witch hunting spree and violate human rights and freedom of expression through a toothless edict," he said.

Court has no power

But Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago yesterday said the Supreme Court had no power to determine whether Ms Arroyo had enough factual basis to declare a state of national emergency

She said the Senate also could not investigate Proclamation No. 1017 since it involved a constitutional provision that "the Senate has no power to change."

Santiago said the Commander in Chief provision of the 1987 Constitution gave the Supreme Court the power to review the factual basis only of a declaration of martial law by the President or the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus.

"The Constitution does not give the court any such power when the President merely declares a national emergency," she said.

"The rule in statutory construction is: '*Inclusio unius est exclusion alterius*.' It means the inclusion of one is the exclusion of another. The inclusion of martial law and suspension of the writ excludes national emergency from judicial review," she said.

While the Constitution gives the high tribunal the power to determine grave abuse of discretion, Santiago said this "does not mean that the court can review the factual basis, because that is forbidden."

Specific acts can be reviewed

"What it means is that the court may review, not PP 1017 itself, but specific acts, such as the alleged raid on the Tribune office, or the arrest of (former Philippine Constabulary chief Ramon) Montaño and (Anakpawis party-list Rep. Crispin) Beltran," Santiago said.

The Senate cannot hold an inquiry in aid of legislation on 1017, she said, "because no legislation is involved."

"What is involved is a constitutional provision, which the Senate has no power to change," she said.

"In practical terms, the Senate in such an inquiry cannot compel the attendance of Cabinet members because the constitutionality of EO 464 is still pending in court. The court refused to issue a TRO against EO 464, so the latter remains valid."

But Santiago said the state of emergency "may not exceed two months."

"The limit of two months imposed (by the Constitution) on martial law and suspension of the privilege also applies to a national emergency. What applies to the greater applies to the smaller," she said.

Emergency temporary

"The definition of emergency in law indicates that it is temporary. 'Emergency' is an unforeseen combination of circumstances that calls for immediate action without time for full deliberation," she added.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said he was apprehensive that Ms Arroyo might use the situation to "intimidate" the Senate into agreeing to Charter change.

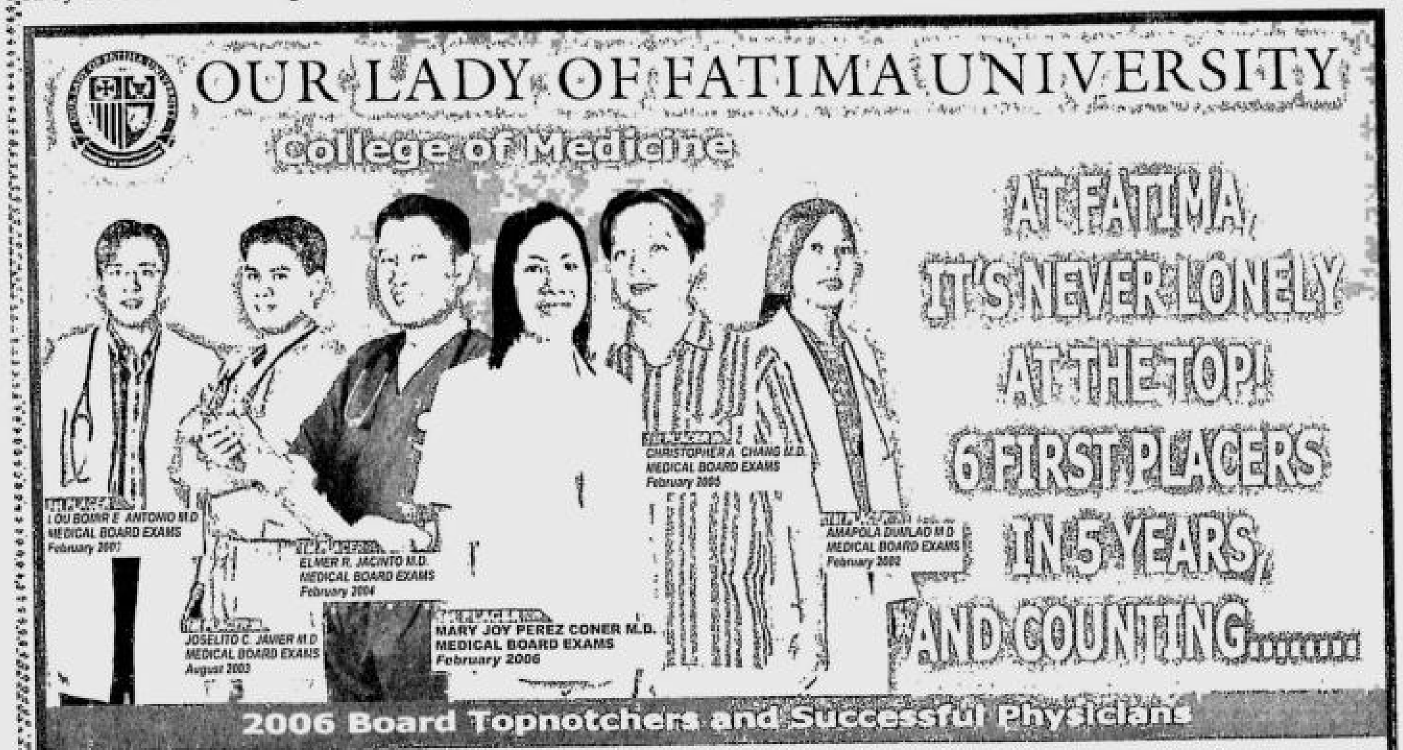
He dared the President to heed the suggestion of her economic advisers to immediately lift the state of emergency to "avoid prolonging its adverse economic and political consequences."

Opposition Sen. Jinggoy Estrada said "the declaration of the state of emergency is part of the administration's scheme to silence the opposition to Charter change that is intended to keep Ms Arroyo in power."

"The country is now under a pseudo-dictatorship that started with the baseless arrests of Ms Arroyo's enemies, dispersal of protest rallies, harassment of the media and other sectors fighting the looming dictator," he added.

Vice President Noli de Castro urged the police and military to be careful in carrying out their duties under the proclamation in the absence of implementing guidelines.

He said the sight of battle-ready soldiers and policemen in the streets was also contributing to the state of panic and confusion. *With reports from Christian V. Esguerra, Cynthia D. Balana and Michael Lim Ubac; and Jolene R. Bulambot, Carla P. Gomez and Joey A. Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau*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Correction

IN THE FEB. 25 issue, a front-page story—"Emergency rule spooks peso, stocks, friends, foes"—misstated the peso-dollar exchange rate on Feb. 24. On Friday, the peso fell to 52.20—not 55.20—against the US dollar.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, February 28, 2006
8th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: 1 P 1:10-16
Gospel: Mark 10:28-31

Peter spoke up and said, "We have given up everything to follow you." Jesus answered, "Truly, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters, or father or mother, or children, or lands for my sake and for the Gospel, who will not receive his reward. I say to you: even in the midst of persecution he will receive a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and lands in the present time and in the world to come eternal life. Do pay attention: Many who now are first will be last, and the last, first."

Commentary

We must take to heart what was said by the prophets and pull ourselves together, and set all our hope on the gift that will be given when Christ appears. We are to be holy in every aspect of our conduct and life. We are to be holy as our God is holy!

Peter, like so many of us, think only of what we already have given or done, saying, "I've given up everything to follow you"—oh! And yet Jesus confirms us in whatever little we have given we will know it a hundred times even in this life, along with persecution and life everlasting. We are so slow and so stingy in what we give up, what we hand over, rather than staking everything on God.

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CBCP joins cartoon fray

By Christian V. Esguerra

FILIPINO CATHOLIC BISHOPS HAVE JOINED the growing global controversy over the publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad.

While maintaining that it was not condoning any acts of violence, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) backed outraged Muslims, saying "insulting words and caricatures may also be considered forms of violence."

"We would like to express our sentiments of solidarity with your sense of indignation and outrage," the CBCP's Ecumenical Commission on Inter-religious Dialogue wrote in "A Letter to Our Muslim Brothers and Sisters."

The open letter was prepared by Ipil Bishop Antonio Ledesma, CBCP vice president and commission chair, and former CBCP president Archbishop Fernando Capalla of Davao, a known advocate of interfaith dialogue.

The bishops broke their silence on the cartoon row as violent demonstrations swept across the Islamic world and West Africa.

Islamic tradition bans the depiction in any form of Allah and Muhammad. Among the cartoons that initially appeared in a Danish publication was one showing the Prophet with a bomb in his turban.

In the Philippines, Muslim communities have held street protests to condemn the caricatures.

Drawing from the Philippine experience, the CBCP noted in the letter that people in the mass media "have often exaggerated conflict stories between Christians and Muslims in Mindanao and other parts of the country, giving rise to a culture of violence and war."

"Media should strive, instead, to present the truth in a balanced way and practice the tenets of peace journalism," the bishops said.

The statement went on to outline the core principles both Muslim and Christian leaders have espoused during inter-religious dialogues.

"We value the spirit of dialogue, tolerance and respect for each other's religious traditions in bridging the cultural differences that have divided our communities in the past and at present," the bishops said.

"Religious freedom and the right of minority communities to their own culture are key values to be promoted."

Denmark's Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen earlier urged Muslims and Christians to take a similar route in resolving the "growing global crisis."

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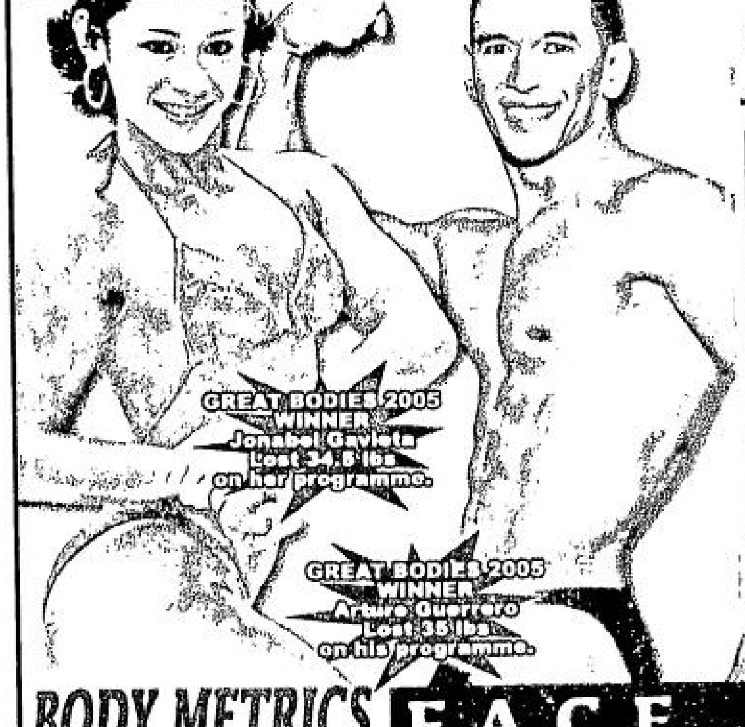
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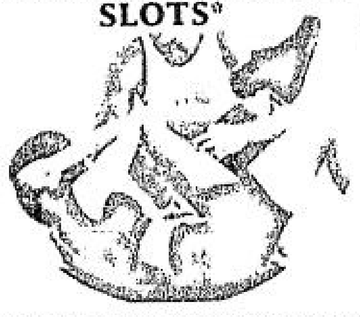

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Police claim coup plotters' D-Day in May 2006

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE WAY THE POLICE DESCRIBED IT, the plot to bring down the Arroyo administration was a vast conspiracy between leftist rebels and rogue soldiers involving massive street protests and terror attacks possibly culminating in May 2006.

The 16 people named in a complaint for rebellion and coup d'etat filed by the police with the Department of Justice yesterday were allegedly involved in the conspiracy.

The supposed conspirators belonged mainly to the Communist Party of the Philippines (PKP) and its armed wing, the New People's Army, and a team of renegade soldiers, called the Makabayang Kawal ng Pilipinas (MKP), according to the police charge sheet, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER.

The police claimed the MKP leader was ex-Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan, who led several failed coup attempts against the Aquino administration in the 1980s and who was among those included in the complaint.

The document claimed Honasan had "Doc" for an alias.

The alleged plot was to reach D-Day in May this year.

The claims in the police charge sheet, some parts of which sounded mind-boggling, could not be immediately confirmed from independent sources.

State prosecutors are to look into the allegations and decide if they are backed by enough evidence to warrant filing formal charges in court.

"The tactical alliance or linking up of the PKP and the MKP was shown by their concerted effort of destabilizing the government aimed at ousting PGMA by overt acts of massive street demonstrations ... with terroristic acts, bomb threats and armed uprisings," the document said.

According to the document, the rogue soldiers had held meetings in Makati, San Juan and Pasig, where they supposedly discussed "their principle of objectives of ousting PGMA (President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo) from the presidency."

But even before the supposed leftist-rightist alliance was formed, the CPP-New People's Army had already drawn up a "three-year plan for 2003-2005 to raise the level of the people's war and make all-around advances in their revolution," said the document.

"Foremost in their (communist) plan was the ousting of PGMA ... by launching the 3 stages of people's war to include the setting up of armed city partisans and broadening its legal fronts," it said.

The plan supposedly would involve the left-leaning groups, which would "intensify massive protests movements," and "guerrilla units and urban terrorists."

As early as December 2004, the group of Honasan, retired Col. Jake Malajacan, retired Capt. Felix Turingan, lawyer Christopther Belmonte and someone with the alias "Friday" had begun recruiting members supposedly within the Armed Forces for the rebel group MKP.

One of the group's recruiters was allegedly 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan, a Magdalo soldier recently recaptured after bolting detention.

The document said the PKP-MKP union "formulated the following joint program of action embodied in the captured document called 'Kasunduan' to start on Feb. 24, 2006, and could culminate on its D-Day sometime in May 2006."

It said some MKP members broke away from the group when they learned that it had joined forces with the communist rebels. They then reported to their military superiors, it said.

When San Juan was arrested, he yielded a flash disc, a device for storing electronic data, containing the agreement between the CPP-NPA and the rogue soldiers belonging to MKP, and the minutes of a meeting dated Feb. 20, the police document said.

"These two electronic documents revealed the identities of the rebels and their comprehensive program of action for the ouster of PGMA and the setting up of a revolutionary government to be ruled by a council," it said.

DOJ ARREST LIST

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE YESTERday released the following list of leftist militants accused by the police of rebellion for allegedly conspiring to overthrow the government. Human rights lawyer Romeo Capulong said it was a "recycled list" of people, some of whom had already assumed legal personalities.

- Jose Maria Sison, aka Joma, Amado Guerrero, Armando Liwanag (chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines)
- Luis Jalandoni (National Democratic Front)
- Spouses Benito and Wilma Tiamzon, aka Celio and Ria, respectively
- Rep. Rafael Mariano
- Satur Ocampo
- Rep. Crispin Beltran
- Rep. Teodoro A. Casiño
- Rep. Lisa Maza
- Rep. Joel G. Virador
- Gregorio Rosal, aka Roger

With alleged links to NDF:

- Tirso Alcantara
- Benjamin Mendoza
- Vic Ladlad
- Nathanael Santiago
- Sotero Llamas
- Julio Atienza
- Edilberto Escudero
- Rosemarie Domanais
- Rogelio Vilanueva
- Leo Velasco
- Rafael Baylosis
- Prudencio Calubid
- Philip Limjoco
- Julius Giron
- Allan Jazmines
- Antonio Cabanatan
- Fidel Agcaoili
- Edilberto Silva
- Maria Concepcion Araneta Bocala
- Jorge Madlos
- Eugenia M. Topacio
- Francisco Fernandez
- Carlos Borjal
- Elizabeth Princepe
- Juliet Sison
- Randall Echaniz
- Rey Claro Casandre
- Edwin Alcid
- Tita Lubi
- Abdias Guadania
- Mike Gamara
- Ka Selbio
- Kim
- Tasio
- Randy
- Rosa/Sisa/Isid
- Novo
- Elya
- Rose
- Others who had been given safe conduct passes during peace talks
- Several other John and Jane Does

GMA cracks down on Left, Right foes

From page A1

Beltran, was arrested over the weekend.

Stepping up their campaign to purge alleged coup plotters, police also filed with Department of Justice prosecutors a complaint of rebellion and insurrection against about 50 leftist leaders, including Communist Party founder Jose Maria Sison and National Democratic Front leader Luis Jalandoni. Both Sison and Jalandoni live in self-exile in the Netherlands.

Cojuangco, Saycon

At the same time, Malacañang ordered authorities to investigate former Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco and political strategist Pastor "Boy" Saycon also for supposed involvement in the plot to oust Ms Arroyo.

Cojuangco and Saycon denied the allegations.

De Venecia told reporters the accused lawmakers would be under his "detention and custody" for the time being.

Except for cases penalized by more than six years' imprisonment, the Constitution bars the arrest of members of Congress while the legislature is in session.

A defiant Ocampo said he and his five House colleagues did not violate any laws.

He said he and his colleagues were attending the session to maintain the "integrity of our position as House members doing our sacred duty."

"We don't accept the legitimacy of the proclamation, and the ensuing crackdown on critics of the government," Ocampo told reporters before entering the session hall.

Casiño said it was a "badge of honor to be considered an enemy" of the Arroyo administration.

Arroyo tool

Mariano said the arrest orders were issued upon the behest of an "illegitimate President." He said Proclamation No. 1017 imposing a state of national emergency was the "tool of Ms Arroyo to stay in power."

Mariano warned the proclamation would "hasten her downfall."

It was Maza who arrived first at 3:20 p.m., followed by Casiño, then Mariano, as about 80 supporters in the Congress lobby chanted, "No to martial law!" and "Never again to martial law!"

Ocampo arrived last, accompanied by House Minority Leader Francis Escudero, Majority Leader Prospero Nograles and Assistant Majority Leader Art Defensor.

Demonstration in Congress

The three congressional leaders fetched Ocampo from the University of the Philippines in nearby Diliman.

Supporters and staff of the militant lawmakers sang "Bayan Ko" while waving posters reading: "No to Marcosian 1017," "Marcos Noon, Gloria Ngayon" and "Uphold Civil Liberties."

A commotion occurred when House security personnel tried to disperse them after the militant lawmakers entered the session hall. Soon, the demonstrators dispersed voluntarily.

Franco and three other police officers were placed under restriction following reports that they had tried to recruit police colleagues to join protesters during Friday's rally to commemorate the 1986 People Power Revolution, according to PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao.

Breach in chain of command

Lomibao's admission was the first clear indication of the seriousness of reports about a breach in the chain of command in the PNP.

The SAF is the most seasoned and most heavily armed police unit.

Lomibao said the three other officers—Senior Supt. Benjamin Magalong, Chief Insp. Ericson Dilag and Insp. Ryan Paloma—"are now under my restrictive custody in Camp Crame."

He said the officers were "not entirely under detention" but they would be restricted to camp and would have escorts.

Only Representative Beltran and 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan, a key official of the Magdalo group, were presented by the police to a panel of public prosecutors at yesterday's inquest at the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group office in Camp Crame.

'This is farcical'

Beltran was defiant, raising his fists and crying out that the government was making a "fool of us all."

"I am questioning the legitimacy of this proceeding," declared human rights lawyer Romeo Capulong. "This is farcical. This is scripted."

Besides San Juan and Beltran, among those charged by police for the crimes of rebellion and coup d'etat on Friday were Ocampo, Virador, Casiño, Mariano, Maza, lawyer Christopher Belmonte, ex-Sen. Gregorio Honasan, retired Col. Jake Malajacan, retired Capt. Felix Turingan, First Lieutenants Angelbert Gay and Patricio Bumidang of the Magdalo, Sison and a person with an alias.

Their cases were entirely different from those filed against some 50 leftist personalties in the DOJ. *(See arrest list at right.)*

At one point during the inquest, Beltran said: "*Kalokohan ito* (This is foolishness)." He demanded to be returned to his detention quarters.

"We will not allow you to leave," State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco shot back and ordered the police to hold Beltran, who was visibly getting angrier by the minute.

Velasco reasoned that the charges had yet to be proven and his team had yet to study the evidence against them.

Meeting in Cojuangco home

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita confirmed that the Department of the Interior and Local Government had been ordered to invite Cojuangco and Saycon for questioning.

The order was spurred by an article in the international weekly newsmagazine Time which said that one of its reporters had witnessed a meeting at Cojuangco's home on the night before a supposed coup attempt against Ms Arroyo was supposed to have been launched.

At the meeting, the Time reporter said that Saycon spoke with someone identified as "Lim" on the phone about an alleged plot by a faction of the military.

The military later sacked Scout Rangers commander Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim for alleged involvement in the plan of some military units to declare their withdrawal of support from Ms Arroyo.

Cojuangco and Saycon denied that they helped Lim plot the ouster of Ms Arroyo last week.

What it was about

Cojuangco confirmed that there was a meeting at his house on Thursday night, but it was about finalizing the plans for the Edsa anniversary celebration. Saycon attended the meeting as a member of the Edsa Commission.

According to Cojuangco, rumors of a coup circulated that night, and soon people were calling them to ask if this was true.

He said "people" also started arriving. At the meeting, Saycon gave a briefing on the current situation, he said.

Cojuangco maintained that the conversation with Lim was about the military plan to join a people's march on Edsa on Friday morning.

"Would you invite the press if you were plotting something?" Cojuangco said.

Saycon and Cojuangco were among the founders of Kampi, the political party founded in 1996 as a vehicle for Ms Arroyo's presidential bid in 1998. But Saycon and Conjuangco were eased out of Ms Arroyo's inner circle due to disagreements arising from campaign funds and other issues.

Cojuangco is the chair of the Philippine Sports Commission. *With reports from Armand N. Nocum and Jerome Aning; and Rolando Pinsoy, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Militants show how to beat proclamation

From page A1

there is no reason to think we will not survive 1017. Arroyo is a poor copy of the dictator Marcos," activist priest Fr. Joe Dizon said. The late President Ferdinand Marcos issued Proclamation No. 1081 when he declared martial law in 1972.

Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said people could openly defy Ms Arroyo's proclamation without being arrested.

They could do this by wearing red shirts, red ribbons or arm bands, pins and shirts with anti-Arroyo markings to signify their protest, Reyes said.

Since assembly in private places is not banned, people could gather in freedom parks, private homes, offices and schools and discuss issues related to the proclamation, he said.

No fear

"Be proud of your convictions. Wear them," Reyes said.

He said people wearing shirts with anti-Arroyo slogans particularly should have no reason to fear.

"I don't think even the military will dare to ask anyone to undress himself in public," Reyes said.

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan chair Carol Araullo said her group was working to secure the release of Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran and others who had been arrested by the police.

Marcos and Gloria

"We are here, we are not hiding. We are not cowed. We will see this regime ousted from power," Araullo said in a press conference.

Dizon, a convenor of the Catholic lay group Kairos, called on religious leaders to support the people in protesting the state of emergency.

A "very significant" difference between Marcos and Ms Arroyo was that the late strongman had the full backing of the military when he declared martial law, he said. Ms Arroyo did not have that kind of military support when she issued her emergency edict, he said.

Appeal to soldiers

Dizon said Sunday's standoff among Marines at Fort Bonifacio showed a crack in the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"We call on them (soldiers) to withdraw their support and join protests for the peaceful removal of Arroyo ... not to launch a coup d'etat but to support the protests," the priest said.

Nationwide protests

He said the mobilization of people clinched success for the first "people power" revolt that ended the Marcos dictatorship in 1986.

"If it can happen during the dictatorship, it can happen now," Dizon said.

Sanlakas president Wilson Fortaleza said that starting today, daily protests would be held in key cities nationwide in defiance of Malacañang's ban on rallies.

"We firmly believe that the people, especially the workers and the poor, will break the illegal state of emergency through open protests ... (Ms Arroyo) does not have a united military to suppress the people," Fortaleza said in a statement.

Military still restive, says Biazon

From page A1

civil liberties and human rights, and reject violence," the US Embassy said in a statement.

"We hope and expect that the Filipino people will seek peaceful solutions to the current situation through constitutional procedures."

"The United States strongly believes in the principle and practice of civilian control of a professional and non-political military," it added.

It was the second statement from the US Embassy in line with its "monitoring" of the political situation since Ms Arroyo placed the country under a state of emergency.

It also marked the first time since the declaration that the embassy directed a message to a more specific entity in the Philippine government—the Armed Forces.

As with the first statement issued on Friday, the embassy's pronouncement yesterday contained no direct expression of support for Ms Arroyo.

State department official

Also yesterday, the embassy announced the scheduled arrival in Manila of US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, the department's most senior official on East Asian and Pacific affairs. *(See story on Page A2.)*

The embassy statement may not ease the seething restiveness in the military.

Biazon, chair of the committee on national defense, recalled that at the end of the standoff, the declaration of the new Marine commandant, Brig. Gen. Nelson Allaga, that the Marines would follow the chain of command was met with reservations by the junior officers.

"There was an added concern because some of the junior officers said that the statement issued by General Allaga was not a collective sentiment," Biazon said.

Another officer, Lt. Col. Aquiles Segunlian, raised the issue of clean elections after the standoff, according to the senator.

Biazon said the reasons ran deeper than the unceremonious relief of Miranda.

"You can't divorce it from events outside that have been transpiring since (Press) Secretary (Ignacio) Bunye waved those two tapes," he said, referring to the "Hello Garci" tapes that spawned allegations Ms Arroyo stole the 2004 presidential election.

Had it gotten the support of a critical mass of soldiers and people, the protest that grew more tense as soldiers drove four tanks out of their barracks and parked them in front of the Marine headquarters could have turned into something like a "withdrawal of support," Biazon said.

"I think the soldiers were waiting for the buildup of the crowd. I mean those who are inclined to withdraw support. (Sunday's) event was along that line, a move with the intention of withdrawal of support," he said.

Personalities from disparate political groups and members of civil society joined the crowd gathered at the gates of the Marine headquarters to show support for the disgruntled Marines, who feared the military brass would send troops to neutralize them.

Hordes of civilians tried to join the crowd, but were kept at bay by antiriot members of the National Capital Region Command and Southern Police District who set up barricades on Lawton Avenue fronting the Marine headquarters.

Former President Corazon Aquino herself was stopped at Gate 3 of Fort Bonifacio on Pasong Tamo Extension, some 300 meters from Gates 7 and 8 of the Marine headquarters, on orders of PNP Director Vidal Querol.

Biazon turned emotional when asked if Col. Ariel Querubin, who led the protest and exhorted the people on TV to proceed to the camp to protect the Marines, could face serious sanctions.

If authorities file charges against Querubin or Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, who had reportedly informed the military brass he would join street protests and withdraw support from the administration on Friday before he was restricted to quarters, they should also file charges against the President and Angelo Reyes, the senator said.

"Remember the withdrawal of support is exactly what was done in January 2001. If they file charges against General Lim, I think they should file charges against the President and General Reyes. They did what General Lim was accused of having done," he said.

Then AFP Chief of Staff Angelo Reyes withdrew support from President Joseph Estrada and backed the hordes that had been massing for days on the streets demanding Estrada's ouster. This prompted Estrada to step down.

Then Vice President Macapagal-Arroyo was later sworn in as President. *With a report from Volt Contreras*

Thaksin foes consider election boycott

BANGKOK—THAI OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE EXPECTED Monday to announce whether they will boycott snap polls called by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, a move that could throw the kingdom deeper into crisis as rallies against the premier enter a second day.

"Our Monday protest will have more people joining from the provinces," said Sondhi Limthongkul, the premier's fiercest public critic and a key figure in the anti-Thaksin movement that has gripped the capital Bangkok.

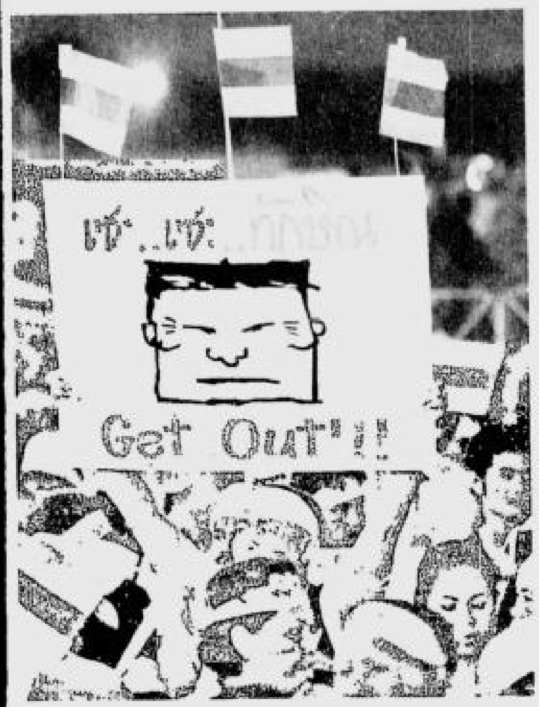
Several thousand demonstrators camped out overnight in Sanam Luang field, where Sunday's rally drew 50,000 for the third anti-Thaksin protest in less than a month.

As dawn broke protesters could be seen gathering their belongings and moving off the field. Among them was Chamlong Srimuang, a former mentor of the premier whose "Dharma Army" of monks and their disciples has vowed to rally for months calling for Thaksin's ouster.

Thaksin has come under increasing demands that he quit over allegations of corruption, and his decision Friday to dissolve parliament and hold elections in April, three years early, has failed to appease his critics.

The three main opposition parties have given Thaksin until Monday to commit in writing to constitutional reforms or face an election boycott that could throw the democratic process into disarray.

"The best solution as of now is to hold a meeting of the four party leaders, including (Thaksin's) Thai Rak Thai party, Monday to consult on constitutional changes to go ahead with political reform," said Abhisit Vejjajiva, leader of the opposition Democrat party. *AFP*



A THAI protester raises a placard with a drawing of Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra Feb. 26, at a mass rally in Bangkok where tens of thousands gathered to demand the premier's ouster. AFP

Japan seeks more details on China organ transplants

TOKYO—JAPAN IS INvestigating human organ transplants in China, a government official said Monday, after a report that at least seven Japanese died due to treatment in the neighboring country.

China has an increasingly lucrative transplant industry but it is tainted by allegations that the organs of executed prisoners are harvested and sold to hospitals.

The Japanese health ministry is seeking more details about the patients who headed to China due to a dearth of organs at home, said Masae Yano at the ministry's Office of Organ Transplantation.

"Our office is investigating the realities of traveling patients and their conditions after organ transplants," she said, adding it would finish a report by the end of March.

"The investigation was prompted by reports that some people had died at Japanese hospitals from infection and other complications after receiving transplant operations in Asian countries," she said.

The reports were forwarded by the Japan Society for Transplantation, which was formed by surgeons and other medical experts, she said.

Jiji Press news agency said Sunday at least seven Japanese patients who traveled to China over the past two years died soon after the operations.

The patients were in their 30s to 50s and died in Shanghai, the northeastern city of Shenyang and the southern city of Changsha from early 2004 to February 2006, Jiji said, quoting diplomatic sources and transplant support groups.

It also said a total of 180 Japanese had undergone liver and kidney transplant operations in China in 2004 and 2005 alone.

Yano declined to comment on the ethical problems over organ transplants in China but acknowledged that the number of organs available in Japan was far less than needed. *AFP*

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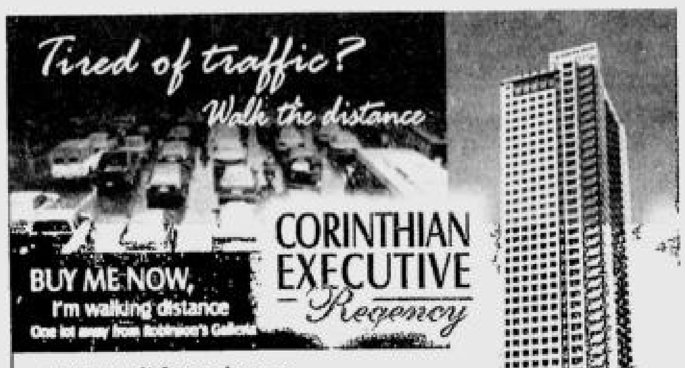

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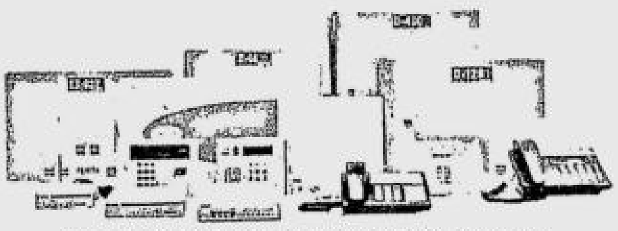
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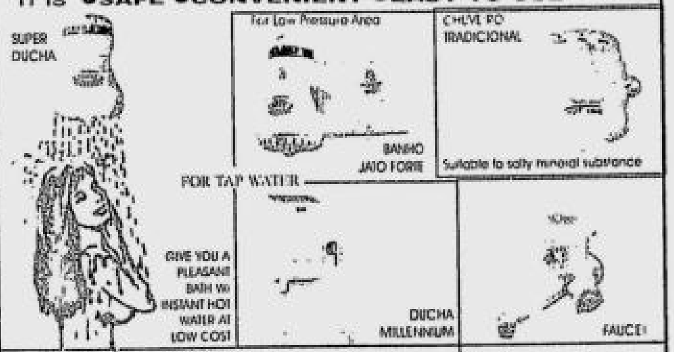

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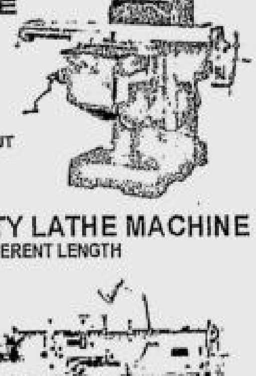
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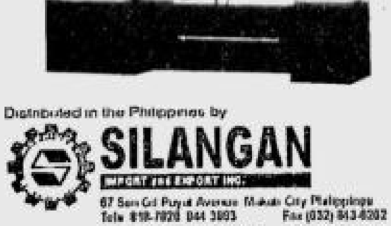
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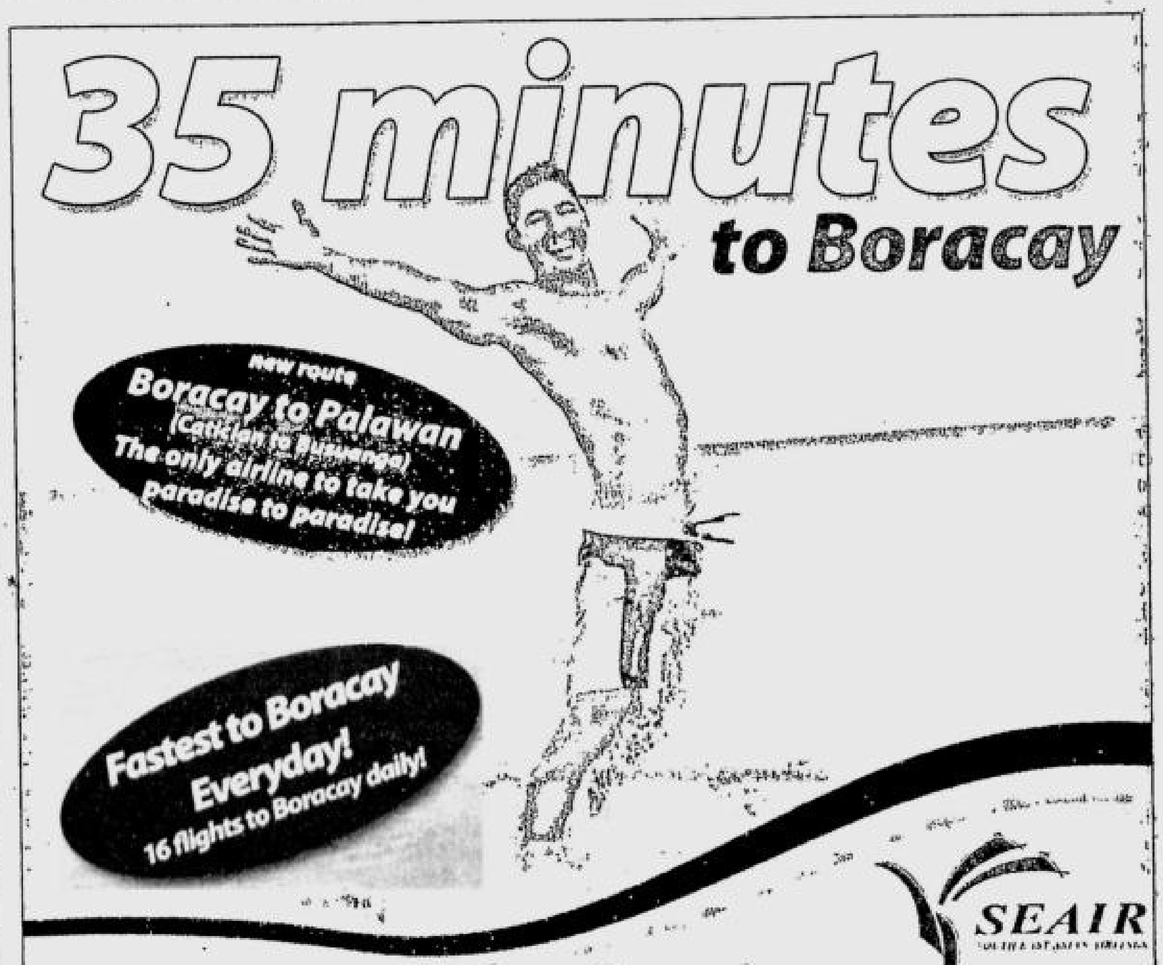
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Bush buffeted by vexation after vexation

By Tom Raum

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush has been buffeted by one calamity after another. Try what he may, he just can't seem to find traction for his second-term agenda.

With midterm congressional elections approaching later this year, it won't get any easier.

The bad news has been coming in waves, from furors over Hurricane Katrina and warrantless wiretapping to the error-plagued rollout of the new Medicare prescription drug program, Vice President Dick Cheney's hunting accident, growing civil strife in Iraq, and now the Republican revolt over the administration's Dubai port decision.

The controversies have rocked the White House and caused alarm among Republican strategists. Their party's electoral hopes in November may depend on whether Bush is able to right his troubled presidency.

"I'm a big reformer. And it's time to reform congressional relations at the White House," said Scott Reed, a Republican consultant who managed Bob Dole's 1996 presidential campaign.

Some of Bush's recent difficulties were aggravated by the White House failure to consult earlier and more frequently on Capitol Hill, where lawmakers are easily offended by perceived presidential slights.

This failure to communicate was most pronounced in the current dispute over who should manage America's seaports, but earlier surfaced in Bush's decision to direct the National Security Agency to engage in warrantless domestic electronic spying as part of the war on terror.

Republicans, who showed near unequivocal support during Bush's first term, have been backing away as they weigh their own political situations.

Since his State of the Union address Jan. 30, the president has traveled several days a week to promote his agenda, especially proposals on health care, US competitiveness and energy self-reliance. His 2005 proposals to revamp Social Security and the tax code remain, but on a back burner.

Yet most of this time, his message has been eclipsed by the controversies raging in Washington.

White House officials were stunned by the most recent developments—the Cheney shooting accident and then the seaport deal. Aides ruefully wondered out loud, what's next?

No one could have foreseen such offbeat episodes that forced the administration into crisis-management mode and diverted attention from Bush's agenda, said one senior official.

Stephen Wayne, a professor of government at Georgetown University, said many of Bush's woes are self-inflicted but there's still time to revive his presidency and for him to avoid premature lame duck labels.

"But he's got to establish his priorities slowly and carefully in conjunction with Republicans in Congress, then work with them," Wayne said. "He can't just pronounce from his podium and expect people to dutifully march behind him." AP

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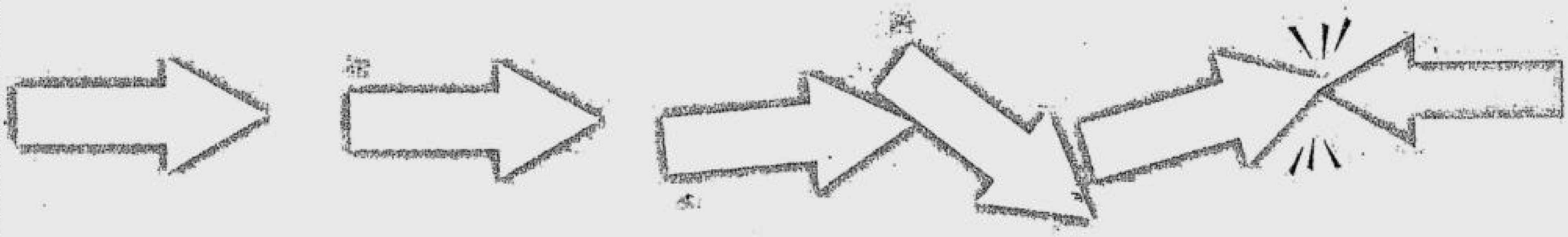
QUEEN OF THE DRUMS
Adriana Peritt, the queen of the drums of Unidos de
performs ahead of the musicians while their school
festivities, Feb. 27. They were performing at the Rio
parade at the sambodrome.



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Vila Isabel samba school,
pens on the first night of
de Janeiro's samba school

AFP

Saudi police clash with suspects in oil refinery plot

RIYADH—SAUDI SECURITY FORCES MONDAY killed five men linked to a bid to blow up the world's largest oil-processing plant, during an armed clash in a Riyadh suburb, security forces and media reports said.

"The clashes are over. The (suspects') lair was assaulted and we killed those we found there," said the source, who did not know the exact death toll.

Ambulances were rushed to the scene but the area around the siege house in the Al-Yarmuk suburb remained sealed-off to regular traffic amid a heavy security presence.

Two helicopters hovered over the scene of the hour-long shoot-out.

The Dubai-based Al-Arabiya television channel reported that "all the suspects, who were barricaded in a house in the east of Riyadh, have been killed," putting the toll at five.

According to its correspondent a large quantity of arms were seized from their hideout which had earlier been besieged by security forces amid a fierce firefight with automatic arms fire and grenades.

The names of the five dead men were on a Saudi most-wanted list of 36 people, the Saudi-financed TV station said.

On Friday suicide bombers attempted but failed to penetrate the oil-processing plant at Abqaiq, in the oil-rich Eastern Province, but their attack left two security men dead. The two would-be suicide bombers were also killed.

An al-Qaida statement posted on the Internet claimed responsibility for the attack and identified the two "martyrdom-seekers" in what the terror network claimed was a successful attack, vowing defiantly to attack more Saudi oil installations.

The firing began at around 5 a.m. after a large number of security personnel were deployed in the area, a resident said.

The sound of automatic gunfire and grenades exploding was heard earlier in the eastern residential suburb of Al-Yarmuk, where the suspects were holed up, with security personnel blocking all exit routes.

The Al-Yarmuk quarter is next to the Grenada suburb where the first clashes took place.

"The clashes began when the security forces were deployed around the terrorists' hideout," the source said.

The two suicide bombers involved in the refinery attack both appeared on a list of suspected al-Qaida members sought by Saudi Arabia, the interior ministry said Sunday.

Abdullah Abdul Aziz Ibrahim al-Tuwaijri and Mohammed Saleh Mohammed al-Ghaith each drove one of the two explosive-laden vehicles, the ministry said.

AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

Germans helped US invasion

NEW YORK—Germany passed intelligence on Saddam Hussein's plan to defend Baghdad to US commanders a month before the United States invaded, The New York Times reported Monday. "Two German intelligence agents in Baghdad obtained a copy of Saddam Hussein's plan to defend the Iraqi capital, which a German official passed on to American commanders a month before the invasion," the Times reported citing "a classified study by the United States military." The Times reported that "in providing the Iraqi document, German intelligence officials offered more significant assistance to the United States than their government has publicly acknowledged. The plan gave the American military an extraordinary window into Iraq's top-level deliberations, including where and how Mr. Hussein planned to deploy his most loyal troops. *AFP*

30 killed in Iraq violence

BAGHDAD—Mortar fire killed 15 people and shooting erupted around two Baghdad mosques on Sunday but pleas for unity and a third day of curfew in the city seemed to dampen sectarian violence that has pitched Iraq toward civil war. Five killed in a minibus, teenagers gunned down playing soccer and three US soldiers were among 30 deaths, fewer than the four other days since a suspected al-Qaida bomb at a Shiite shrine sparked reprisals on minority Sunnis and the biggest test of Iraq's survival as a unified state since the US invasion. Well over 200 people have been killed since Wednesday and the defense minister has warned of an "endless civil war." *Reuters*

Iran-Russia nuke deal

BUSHEHR, Iran—Iran has reached a "basic" agreement with Russia on jointly enriching uranium, officials said on Sunday—but there was no immediate sign that it would suspend home-grown enrichment to allay fears that it is developing nuclear weapons. It was unclear what this basic agreement involved and both Russian and Iranian officials identified serious obstacles to a full deal. These principally concerned a suspension of Tehran's home-grown uranium enrichment work, the main demand of Western powers who are threatening to press for UN sanctions. The original Russian proposal had been for Iran's uranium to be enriched in Russia to defuse suspicions that Iran might divert some nuclear fuel into a weapons program. *Reuters*

Exubera for diabetes treatment

NEW YORK—Pfizer Inc. has announced that Exubera (insulin human [rDNA origin]) Inhalation Powder has been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of adults with type 1 and type 2 diabetes. Exubera was found in clinical trials to be as effective as short-acting insulin injections, and to significantly improve blood sugar control when added to diabetes pills. Exubera, which is expected to be available for patients by mid-year, is the first inhaled form of insulin and the first insulin option that does not need to be administered by injection in the United States. "Exubera is a major, first-of-its-kind, medical breakthrough that marks another critical step forward in the treatment of diabetes, a disease that has taken an enormous human and economic toll worldwide," said Hank McKinnell, chair and chief executive officer of Pfizer. "The global incidence of diabetes is currently at epidemic levels. Millions of patients are not achieving or maintaining acceptable blood sugar levels, despite the availability of current therapies. Exubera meets a critical medical need by offering a highly effective and needle-free alternative to diabetes pills and insulin injections to manage this complicated, debilitating disease."

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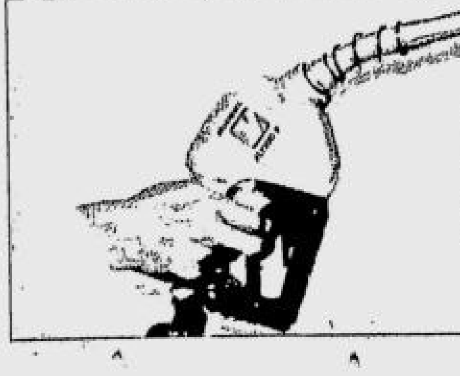

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OPINION

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Political standoff

EDITORIAL

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO IS ONE LUCKY woman. In the last five years, she has survived several serious challenges to her presidency. Besides enjoying such great luck, she is also one smart political tactician who has outmaneuvered her opponents at every turn.

She escaped ouster by the skin of her teeth when an angry, howling mob banged and rattled the gates and fences of Malacañang in the so-called "Edsa 3." This was after police subjected her predecessor Joseph Estrada to what the mob considered as the humiliating procedure of fingerprinting and taking mug shots of him. The police, exercising maximum tolerance, saved her that time.

In July 2003, about 300 junior officers and soldiers stealthily occupied the luxury Oakwood Apartments in the heart of the financial district of Makati and threatened to blow up their surroundings unless Ms Arroyo resigned. She threatened to send the army in and to blow up the place to kingdom come. After a tense standoff, the proverbial cooler heads and the mistahs of some of the mutineers prevailed, and the junior officers surrendered.

The most serious challenge to her legitimacy as president came last year after the "Hello Garci" tapes surfaced. The tapes were considered concrete evidence of the charge that she had rigged and stolen the presidential election in 2004. Leaders of the opposition and civil society called on her to resign, but after a long delay she apologized only for "a mental lapse" and did not step down. Things came to a head when 10 members of her Cabinet called on her to resign. Former President Fidel V. Ramos came to her rescue and proposed a change in the form of government to parliamentary so she could have a graceful exit in 2007. But now, these plans are hanging in the balance.

Last week, the President proclaimed a state of emergency after alleging that the political opposition, "military adventurists" and communist rebels were working together to unseat her. Only last Sunday night, what could have been a smaller version of People Power took place at the Marine headquarters when a small crowd of civil society people and politicians surrounded a Marine colonel who was protesting the relief of the Marine commandant. In the end, the standoff was resolved after the protesting Marines' call for people power was largely ignored.

It appears that the nation is in for a long period of political turmoil and instability while the issue of the legitimacy of Ms Arroyo's presidency remains unresolved. Meanwhile, all phases of national life are affected. Government services and operations are affected whenever there is a political or military challenge to the President. The economy suffers; the peso and the stock exchange take a beating. Classes are suspended. Even congressional activities slow down.

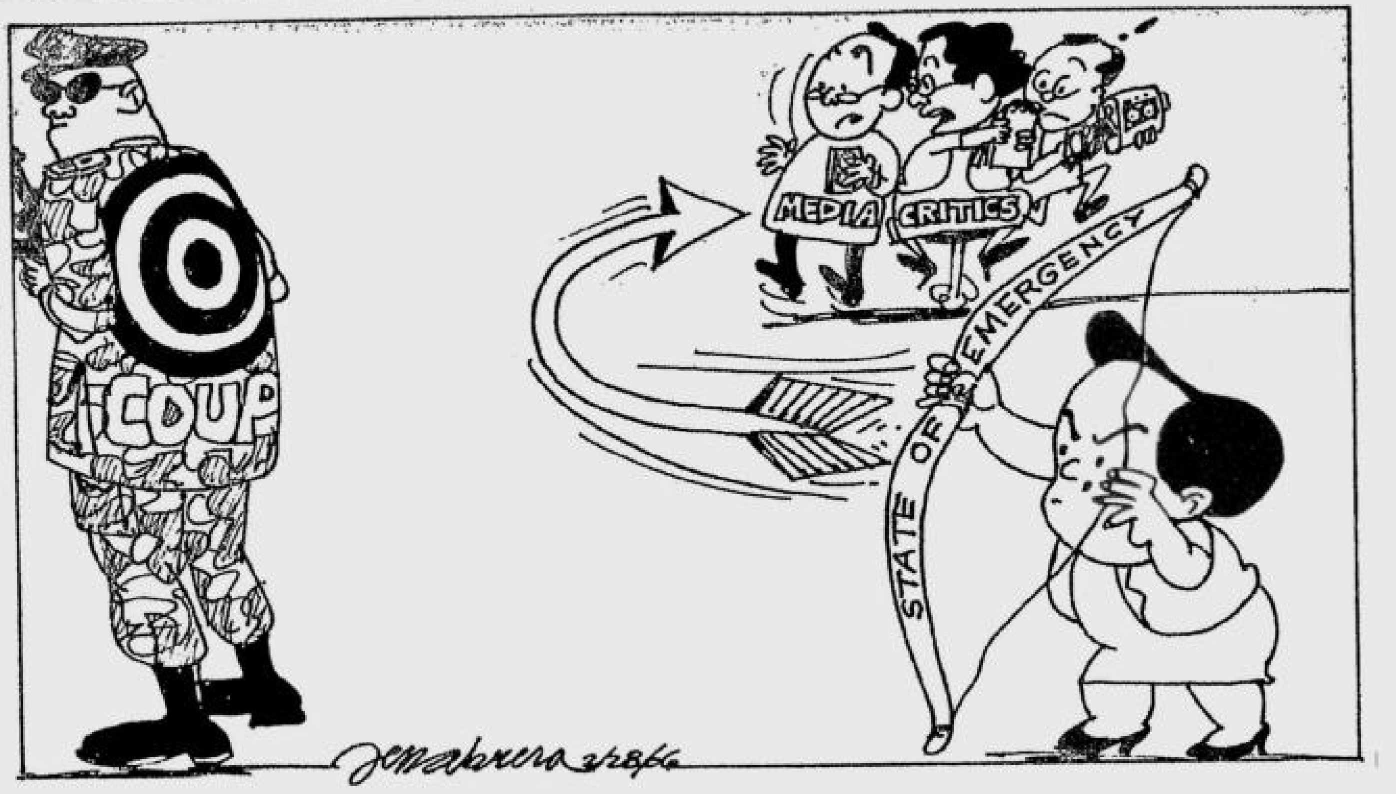
This state of uncertainty and instability cannot go on for a long time without taking a toll on the nation's life. The nation and the government cannot move on while political turmoil swirls around the person who is supposed to take the lead in social and economic development efforts.

Something has to be done to put to rest the issue of the legitimacy of the Arroyo presidency. She has been asked to resign for the good of the country, but she has turned down all demands. Ms Arroyo, through all her acts and decisions, seems to be saying, "Over my dead body."

The impeachment route was tried, but expectedly, it was blocked by the overwhelming numbers of the President's allies in the House of Representatives. It may be tried again sometime this year, but unless there is a drastic political realignment in the House, any impeachment move can be expected to fail again.

Last week, a powerhouse group of businessmen, religious leaders and former high government officials met to discuss how to end the continuing political deadlock. But from early indications, the group will not be able to do much about the political standoff except talk about it and make some proposals that will surely be rejected by a President who is single-mindedly determined to stay in power at all costs.

So it appears that the nation is in for a lot of political instability over the long haul unless some miracle happens before the next presidential election in 2010. The nation went through a similar period of instability from August 1983, when former Sen. Benigno S. Aquino Jr. was assassinated upon his return to the country, until February 1986 when the four-day People Power Revolution toppled the Marcos dictatorship. Filipinos, like all other Asian peoples, are a patient people. They can wait, unless...



Stacking the decks

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

THERE'S BEEN A COLLECTIVE SIGH OF RELIEF that no blood was spilled in that tense five-hour standoff at Fort Bonifacio, where heavily armed Marines bolted themselves in to protest the relief of their commander. Fratricide would have stamped indelibly the mark of Cain on the forehead of this nation.

All of us, nonetheless, were diminished by this incident.

The Marine commandant, Lt. Gen.Renato Miranda, was relieved two days after government cracked down on a coup. Miranda quit voluntarily, Malacañang claimed.

Not so, snapped one of his men, Col. Ariel Querubin. In protest, Marines were holding a vigil in the chapel, he said. Then he asked Catholic bishops to defend the Marines. "We'll wait for all the people to really come here and protect us." *Onli in da Pilipins.*

Five hours is too short to whip up a critical mass of people. But the Palace took no chances. It leaned on the press and blocked approaches, shooing away even former President Corazon Aquino. Among the few who were able to come were former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, some La Salle brothers, Catholic nuns—and improbable figures like Rep. Imee Marcos. Was she oblivious to the irony that People Power chased the Marcoses out of the Palace?

People in gated enclaves dusted off their visas. Anxious overseas workers worked phones to check on their families. In the provinces, people sat glued to TV sets. But there was none of the spontaneous pouring into the streets, as in People Powers 1 and 2.

Around Fort Bonifacio, the poor jostled for view along sidewalks to watch, as in "Wowowee." Whatever "solution" emerged would have little impact on their daily lives of grinding penury and limited hopes.

"We follow the duly constituted authority," said Brig. Gen. Nelson Allaga, as the Marines returned to barracks. Even as the sparse crowds melted, a defiant officer yelled support for Miranda. So, was this aborted *golpe* about personal loyalties? Or was this about crucial issues of national survival?

"For all the trappings of national government, we are not far from the era of the barangays," wrote the late historian Horacio de la Costa, SJ. "And we conduct our affairs pretty much in the manner of Lapu-Lapu and Humabon. (Today's) congressman who moves around with his bodyguards is not much different from the datu with his retainers."

So, we can kiss goodbye our faint hopes that the military, disinfected from the coup virus, had reemerged as non-partisan organization, loyal to constitutional values. And is it to early to bid farewell to our lingering pretensions to being a democratic country?

Look at General Order No. 5, which clamps prior restraints on media, fracturing the Constitution in the process. It resembles, in essence, Public Information Order No. 1, issued on Sept. 25, 1972, by then Information Minister Francisco Tatad. Both would substitute government censors for editors.

Under martial law, the elastic phrase "national security" promptly became identical with security of the dictator and family. Inevitably, Philippine National Police censors would skid down the same road.

Will publication, for example, of the disguised plan to resurrect the no elections proposal in Article XX (transitory provisions) of the proposed constitution violate GO 5? The draft would sneak in unelected parliamentarians, allow Ms Arroyo to retain the presidency—and expand her powers to boot.

These led former Trade Secretary Vicente Paterno to write: "I notified members of the former Constitutional Commission that I dissociate myself from all ConCom activities."

Take a closer look at sections crafted by lawyers Romela Bengzon and Raul Lambino. Are these not the same powers wangled by Marcos?

Section 7 cancels the elections. This is the notorious "No-El" plan and would allow incumbent senators and congressmen to coast along for three unelected years (2007-2010). Section 9 provides that 30 persons would become "members of the Parliament upon appointment by the President." That's "stacking the decks." Here are 30 MPs who'll say amen to their benefactor.

Section 11 says this unelected and stacked Parliament "shall elect an interim Prime Minister. He shall be a member of the Cabinet." So, why is the interim Prime Minister not the head of government, as in other parliaments? The next section unlocks this mystery.

Section 12 stipulates that the interim Prime Minister and Cabinet exercise all powers "under the direction and supervision of the incumbent President," i.e., President Macapagal-Arroyo.

You think that's all? Read Section 13: "In the interim Parliament, the incumbent President (i.e., President Arroyo) shall exercise the powers vested in the Head of State and the Head of government under this Constitution."

That's in the congressional pipeline now even as Speaker Jose de Venecia soothingly assures one and all the "No-El" plan is dead.

This transitory provision plan would also be "DOA" (Dead-On-Arrival) if the press would give it the full critical examination it deserves. Investigative reports would quickly note that in the new body to promote "Cha-cha," co-chairs were main sponsors in ConCom of these onerous sections. And their backer? "Elementary, my dear Watson."

In a not-for-attribution interview, a senior official says: "We will ram through Article XX and the whole package by July."

What's magic about July? we asked. That's when another impeachment case will be filed, he replied. "*Ah, so desu ka,*" the Japanese censors would say in World War II newsrooms.

Waning, waning, waned

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

FIDEL RAMOS HAS A POINT. CORAZON Aquino met with several coup attempts during her term, and unlike the one that took place last Friday, there was no mistaking they were coups. They were not in the nature of what Gen. Generoso Senga calls "withdrawal of support," they were in the nature of advancement of troops. But despite the ferocity of those attempts—the last one, in December 1989 nearly succeeded, the rebel forces pushing government to the wall before American planes came to the rescue—never once did Cory declare a state of emergency or curtail civil liberties. GMA has done so.

As a result of which, Ramos says, his support for GMA is "waning, waning, waning..." Which subverts his point completely. What idiocy. You see a patent display of tyranny, you do not say your support is waning, you say it is gone. You see a patent display of dictatorship, you do not say maybe, you say no. This is not a time for chewing cigars, this is a time for resolve. This is not a time for political trapeze, this is a time to stand up and be counted.

This only reminds us again that Ramos is the reason GMA is still there despite helloing Garci.

The fact that GMA has declared de facto martial law—arrests without warrant and taking over vital installations, as even two-bit lawyers in this country have pointed out, are not emergency powers but martial-law powers—on so light a provocation compared to the ones Cory experienced clearly shows it is not spontaneous, it is premeditated. It is not a defensive posture, it is an offensive action—in all the possible senses of the word "offensive." It is the unleashing of the very thing that had already been fashioned by the Injustice Secretary Raul Gonzalez late last year. It's thoroughly ugly—the idea and its author.

The colossal difference in response between Cory and GMA owes to two things.

The first is that Cory was dedicated to preserving liberal democracy, or the democracy that prevailed before martial law, while GMA is dedicated to preserving herself, or the power that she has craved obsessively from the start. You may fault Cory for many things (and I did; I was one of her bitterest critics then), but you may not fault her for being power-hungry. I did say toward the end of her term in 1992 that given her stature, she could probably secure another term again if she wanted to. Her lawyers could easily have found a way around the proscription against a president having a second term, and the public would not have minded. Despite the many faults of her government, she retained an enormous amount of goodwill everywhere.

But she did not run again, and she voluntarily gave up power. I ran out of praises at the time for what she did. I do not know which Cory has done more heroically, leading a nation against a dictatorship after August 1983, or giving up power after May 1992. In this country, in particular, I'd go for the second: that is courage way beyond the call of duty. Embracing a cause against tyranny has become fairly common, turning one's back on power has become starkly rare. What lays the best and brightest in this country is not fear, it is greed. Look at the former activists who are part of GMA's junta now. Truly, as T.S.Eliot says, the world ends not with a bang but with a whimper.

From Day One, GMA wore her vaulting ambition on her sleeve. And it is a testament to the blindness of the people of this country, or their greed, that either they did not see it or thought they could bend it for their own ends. Many of them are to be found now opposing GMA. But weren't her Marcosian tendencies abundantly in display from the start? I kept warning about it, particularly during the 2004 campaign when she was raiding the public coffers and spending taxpayers' money like a drunken sailor: Like Marcos, she'll refuse to go, probably well past 2010. She has. She will.

The second difference between Cory and GMA that accounts for the difference in their responses is that Cory was exceedingly popular while GMA is exceedingly unpopular. That explains as well the difference in the nature of the coup that was launched against them.

The coups against Cory were coups in the strictest sense of the term. They were bathed in secrecy—such as anything in this country can—and were meant to be surgical strikes. The reason for that is that the plotters could not just count on government, including the chain of command, to resist them, it could count on the fundamental institutions of society—media, civil society, the Church, etc.—to do so. The media in fact rose as one to bitterly condemn the 1989 coup attempt, publishing a pooled editorial to that effect.

Today, if the media are rising as one, it is only to condemn GMA taking on martial-law powers. Or at least, the respectable media, not the toadies or today's equivalent of the Daily Express of the past (or the Daily Suppress, as the public more accurately called it). The coup itself was openly advertised, the plotters fearing only government's response to it. Completely unlike the coups of the past, the plotters expected the fundamental institutions of society as well as the public not only to not resist it but to support it. Hell, they even expected their higher ups to go along with it.

Different coups, different responses. The coups against Cory were launched by people determined to topple a legitimate government and scuttle democracy as we know it. Her response was to strengthen the institutions of the democracy even more. The coup against GMA was launched by people determined to topple a government shrouded in illegitimacy and, at least by its avowal, restore democracy as we know it. Her response has been to raze the institutions of democracy completely.

What can I say? I love Cory.

When politicos exploit a powderkeg situation

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

TIME, IN A STORY BY NELLY SINDAYEN, DEtailed how a group that included Pastor Saycon finalized plans to withdraw support from President Macapagal-Arroyo last Thursday evening at the Makati residence of Peping Cojuangco. Nelly wrote that Saycon assured a Washington official of continued friendly relations with the new government, and spoke to Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, who told the group it was "all systems go" for the plot at the Edsa Shrine. But since the story broke out, Saycon has denied his involvement, asserting he was just helping plan for the Edsa I celebration. Frankly, between him and Nelly, whom I've known for many years, I'd believe her anytime. She is a veteran journalist and wouldn't put her career on the line on a fake story.

Interestingly, Saycon succeeded just days earlier in getting GMA to reappoint him to the 15-member Edsa People Power Commission, as his term expired last November. To accommodate him, GMA expanded the EPPC and he took his oath the other week in Malacañang.

Why was the Time reporter invited to that secret meeting? My guess is that the plotters must have felt confident that by the time the Time story came out, GMA would have fallen.

* * *

If some people had doubts about government's claim of a "tactical conspiracy" between the ultra-Right, the ultra-Left and the opposition, that might have been dispelled last Sunday evening, when active and retired politicians rushed to Fort Bonifacio to give aid and succor to Marine Col. Ariel Querubin, who helped stage a coup against Cory Aquino in 1989, and Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda. The two were relieved of command on suspicion of conspiring to bring down the government. The presence of the politicians heightened the tense standoff between the Querubin group and the newly appointed Marine commandant, Brig. Gen. Nelson Allaga. Many people could really have been hurt had it not been for Allaga's tactful handling of the situation.

The politicians who trooped there were quite irresponsible in fanning an already volatile situation. Aquino's avowal, as she tried to enter the compound, that "all I want to do is pray," sounded quite plastic, and the AFP high command wisely stopped her in Makati. Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, who had earlier been reported to have asked for people power to protect the rebel Marines, went on air not only to deny the rumor but also to say that all those who wanted to pray were welcome in various adoration chapels. It's heartbreaking to see how Aquino and other politicians could be totally insensitive to the powder-keg situation in the Marine compound.

* * *

As the turmoil boiled in Metro Manila, local government officials, led by House members and the 1,600-strong Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines, rallied behind the embattled President. As House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles noted, 90 percent of elected officials support the administration, while a small group of has-beens', rightists and leftists seeks to bring it down.

My brother Danny Olivares and his wife Neomi were in Davao City last weekend, and he recalled that on Friday night, they were in Jack's Ridge, a beautiful cluster of restaurants high up on a hill overlooking the city. He noted that while a huge screen in the restaurant showed the police chasing ralliers in Manila, no one minded it, and the Davaoenos continued to dine. Danny said the attitude was, "We don't want to have any part in the trouble in Manila. We just want to go on with our lives here." This seems to reflect the attitude of the rest of the country.

* * *

There's a lot of Monday morning quarterbacking among lawyers and politicians on PP 1017. Some lawyers echo former President Fidel Ramos' opinion that 1017 was "an overkill." It seems to me, however, that it is easy to say "overkill" when they didn't have to make the tough decisions that had to be made last Friday. Perhaps the best perspective on "overkill" was a Supreme Court ruling cited in last Saturday's analysis by Fr. Joaquin Bernas, SJ. Said the Court: "... [T]he factual necessity of calling out the Armed Forces is not easily quantifiable and cannot be objectively established since matters considered for satisfying the same is a combination of several factors which are not always accessible to the courts... In many instances, the evidence upon which the President might decide that there is a need to call out the Armed Forces may be of a nature not constituting technical proof. On the other hand, the President as commander in chief has a vast intelligence network to gather information, some of which may be classified as highly confidential or affecting the security of the state."

What the Court was saying was that there may be information not available even to ex-presidents but only to an incumbent that could impact on his decision. The Star's legal columnist, Jose Sison, gave GMA that much allowance.

* * *

Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman reminded Aquino that there is a precedent to PP 1017, and this is PP 503, which she issued on Dec. 6, 1989, following the bloodiest coup attempt. He pointed out that Cory's proclamation was legal then "and a similar declaration now cannot be less valid and legitimate." He added that the government "does not have to wait for a coup d'etat or rebellion to erupt and spread before it's nipped in the bud." But Lagman also stressed that while he has termed PP 1017 as "at worst a harmless superfluity," he does not condone "wayward implementation ... which transgresses civil liberties like free assembly, freedom of expression and press freedom." What the government should cautioned against, he said, is "the over-extension of the PP to stifle political dissent and contrive warrantless arrests and criminal charges against perceived 'enemies of the State.'"

Paranoia and abuse

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

ONE OF THE FEATURES OF THE EARLY MARTIAL-law regime that, I suspect, drew more detractors than the more heavy-handed moves against the "enemies of the State," were the impromptu haircuts that law enforcers gave long-haired male citizens.

All young—and not-so-young—men needed to do was to sport hair cascading below the ears to earn the immediate ire of soldiers and police, who would pull them out of jeepneys, buses and private vehicles for a shearing. I have yet to hear an explanation for these free tonsorial services, and what, if ever, the link was between revolutionary fervor and long hair.

The only reasonable explanation I can come up with is that, given broad powers to go after perceived threats to the Marcos regime, the "*utak pulbura at pulis patola*," as human rights lawyer Rene Saguisag calls them, decided they might as well create a New Society of neat and shaven individuals even as they were going after leftist radicals and rightist oligarchs.

"Absolute power corrupts absolutely," the saying goes. Absolute power also leads to paranoia and abuse.

* * *

FR. JAMES B. Reuter, S.J., in his profile for the book "Heroes," recalls an incident that led to his house arrest for two years: the killing of a shoemaker known as Mang Adrian.

Mang Adrian ran a small shoe shop across the convent of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, and by dint of careful saving was finally able to buy a building in Quezon City. He had four tenants, three of whom readily agreed to move when told Mang Adrian was moving in. But the fourth refused to leave or pay the rent due, simply declaring that he had a friend in the military. Near Christmas of 1976, three men entered Mang Adrian's shop and took him away. That afternoon, Mang Adrian's wife received a phone call, with someone telling her to come and claim her husband's body.

Father Reuter's crime? He sent reporters of a little-known newsletter, The Communicator, to ask questions at Crame, and they were able to dig up a warrant signed by Rolando Abadilla, one of the more notorious enforcers of martial law. Abadilla, it turns out, was a cousin of the recalcitrant tenant. And when Abadilla's female relatives, devout churchgoers, heard about the incident and asked him about it, Abadilla led a contingent of 11 vehicles loaded with officers and soldiers and armed with an arrest warrant signed by Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile. The National Office of Mass Media, which Reuter headed, was shut down for two years, with guards on 24-hour rotation.

That was how petty—and deadly—the martial-law regime could be.

* * *

WE already have had a preview of how law enforcers would apply Proclamation 1017.

Last Friday, various groups attempted to march from various points of the metropolis to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Edsa People Power Revolution—and yes, to denounce the declaration of a state of national emergency. They were stopped and driven away at every assembly point, with police claiming the marchers were violating the "no permit, no rally" ordinance.

Leaders of the marchers, including UP professor and INQUIRER columnist Randy David, were later arrested (and since released), with the arresting officers explaining that they were simply being "invited" to shed light on issues of national import. This, despite the fact that a law (co-authored by Saguisag and Wigberto Tañada in the Senate) has been passed that makes "invitations" from police and military officers illegal.

The next day, Anakpawis party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran was arrested, the basis for the arrest being a warrant for rebellion issued, would you believe, in 1985, 21 years ago, before the Edsa uprising. Lawyer Argee Guevarra, describing the situation, said it was "absurd," for how could an individual be arrested for rebellion "when the (anti-Marcos) rebellion won?!"

That same morning, police entered the printing facilities and editorial offices of the opposition newspaper Daily Tribune and took away some documents. It wasn't clear what the raid on the Tribune sought to achieve.

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao told a press conference that the Tribune staff would be free to write and operate as they wanted, provided they adhered to "government standards," though he has yet to issue those standards and explain how such "standards" would be applied, assuming the media accepted or agreed with them.

* * *

OBVIOUSLY, the Tribune is being made to serve as a warning to other, bigger media outlets.

Perhaps the authorities hope that if the media community could be intimidated into silence or complicity by a raid on a small-circulation daily, then they wouldn't have to go after the other newspapers and broadcast stations. Troops have also been posted outside the premises of the two biggest broadcast networks. "We are on Red Alert," reads a sign on the gate of ABS-CBN.

During the coverage of the standoff between two factions of the Marines Sunday, ANC anchors entertained a phone call from someone who introduced himself as a spokesperson of an underground military organization, although the call was discontinued because it was choppy and largely unintelligible. But this didn't stop Cabinet Secretary Ricardo Saludo, a station guest at the time, from pontificating that, based on what he had heard, the caller's statement could be construed as "inciting to sedition."

The cheek of the man! While taking advantage of the media's reach to spin the events as he saw fit, he was also issuing a veiled threat not just against ANC but to all of media as well. Perhaps we are seeing the early manifestations of how some people are getting drunk with power this early in the game. I just hope they get a really bad hangover.

The summing up

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

IT'S STRANGE HOW IT SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESterday that I started writing this column and yet 12 years have elapsed. Way back in 1994, I probably knew just a bit more than most people about Philippine history, customs and traditions.

My interest in this history and heritage started in one of my incarnations as a seller of antiques. Prior to that, I was a teacher, a profession I have never quite been able to shake off; imparting knowledge is truly a privilege and an excellent occupation for people with messianic complexes. In the course of buying artifacts, it was important to discover their provenance, especially to ensure the object was not stolen, to establish its age and where it may have been made. It was here that a way of life that was gone began to emerge from the shadows, fascinating stories of people that were fact and not fiction, tragedies that had long been forgotten, ghosts that had been laid to rest suddenly reappeared. I began to read Philippine history—not the one taught in school but first-hand accounts. It helped that I enjoy reading and can't imagine life without a book. The thing about it is that it wasn't quite dates and events that I found fascinating but the trivia that opened more windows into that shadowy world. It was the footnotes, not the text.

Under the circumstances, there was no way that one's interest would be limited to just antique furniture, *santos* or even clothes. The houses and buildings began to resonate as well, for weren't these too part of that past?

Writing about heritage led me to most of the archival sections of libraries which was a great treat. It also made me realize what a pity it is that we've lost the Spanish language since most of the books and documents pertaining to Philippine history and related subjects were written in Spanish. This means that there's no way for most people to check whether a writer is making things up or slanting facts since they can't deal with primary sources. Of course, some people will not fail to point out that those books are not so much about the Philippines but about Spain. I can only recommend that they read the books of Dr. William Henry Scott who had the brilliant, serendipitous idea of looking up words in Spanish-Tagalog dictionaries to discover the culture of that early Filipino.

There also exist in some of these libraries collections of photographs, prints and engravings of the 18th and 19th century that show a country we will never see, not just because it's the past but because what World War II failed to destroy, we managed to demolish ourselves. It may have made economic sense to the Chinese who bought property in Binondo to maximize such valuable real estate and put up high-rises rather than preserving one-story *bahay na bato* even if the Rizal family, for example, had lived in that house once. It probably still makes more sense to politicians to rename old streets with the names of their relatives or some other person whose chief claim to fame may have been his lackluster years as a councilor or senator or congressman; his record being no treat to their own mediocrity.

What apparently didn't occur to them is that the old Binondo, having luckily escaped the destruction that leveled the south side of the Pasig to rubble, had much more ambience with its cobblestones and quaint names, more history, and wonderful examples of architecture. The names told stories: Fumaderos (for the opium dens), Aceiteros (sellers of oil), Jaboneros (sellers of soap), Ilang-Ilang (for the sellers of this oil that made the Philippines a top exporter of this essence in the 19th century), Sacristia (for the road that led to the sacristy of the church) and so on. It would have been such a fantastic come-on for tourists since they would not have found it anywhere else in the Orient. But it would have been an even greater privilege for the young to walk the streets national heroes walked and see the hotel, for instance, where Rizal stayed when he first returned from Europe. No one knows what those streets are now and even the Manila as Venice that Daniel Burnham rhapsodized about has been totally annihilated. You know it's okay if you never had it to begin with, but to have had it and blown it—that's really pathetic. But with us that's generally the case.

Writing a column about historical events also opens your eyes to certain realities, like the fact that the betrayal of the Filipino people by their leaders didn't start in the last century, or how often rebels/heroes were betrayed by their own comrades and delivered to the Spaniards, Americans or Japanese. Or how historical accounts are slanted or facts omitted depending on what the writer wanted to convey, making you wonder how many of our so-called heroes would remain heroes if people knew some truths about them.

The other week, while listening to Japanese Ambassador Ryuichiro Yamazaki speak about the destruction of Manila during the Liberation, it occurred to me that we were then prostrate and betrayed and never really managed to get on our feet again. Listen to your grandparents speak of their life before the war, and you'll know what I mean.

The time has come to move on and I would like to thank all my readers, hoping that their interest in heritage and Filipino traditions and customs was awakened. To all my colleagues in the press as well as Tintin, Tess and Cita and to all the people who made those years meaningful and fruitful, many thanks.

Searching

YOUNG BLOOD

John Henry C. Liquete

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I ASKED MYSELF A LONG TIME AGO HOW MUCH OUR politicians value the youth, but up to this day I am still asking that question. In my search for answers, I instead found myself asking more questions. For it seems that every administration has disregarded the youth and ignored their voice.

The Arroyo administration completely misses the point. Instead of asking Fidel Ramos, Jose De Venecia, Cory Aquino or Joseph Estrada about their views on Charter change, would it not be more prudent to ask the youth what they think about these issues? Since we are supposed to be the beneficiaries of Cha-cha, isn't it only right that our leaders ask us what we think?

I really do not care what our past presidents or what the members of sham Consultative Commission have to say. I care more about what my fellow youth have to say. I do not want to inherit a constitution drafted by unscrupulous politicians. I do not want to inherit a government that came to power by lying, cheating and stealing.

Unfortunately, the actions of the administration will create a big quandary for future generations. Our present-day politicians have been more than willing to sacrifice the voice and the future of the youth to pay off political debts. I hope they will not forget that it was the power of the youth that toppled two presidents and hopefully will topple the squatter in Malacañang.

The proposal to shift to a parliamentary form of government is based on flawed premises. There is no empirical basis to say that a parliamentary system of government will solve the problem of poverty. The problem does not lie with the system but with the people who run the system. What is needed is a strong political will to reform the Commission on Elections, strengthen our local governments, renegotiate our foreign debts, fortify our ailing domestic economy and reform the judiciary. Instead of exporting our engineers, nurses, doctors and our professionals, I think it would be more prudent if we exported our corrupt public officials.

For decades, Philippine society has been dominated by apathetic and politically mis-educated Filipinos. At times we blame the so- called *masa* for electing unscrupulous, untrustworthy and incompetent public officials, but we should in fact be blaming ourselves, the so-called "educated" citizenry, for failing to politically educate our misguided countrymen.

It's time we shed our apathy. I do not want to hear someday that Manny Pacquiao has been elected president and that Pinoy Big Brother housemates have become senators.

The media have to take a more aggressive role in reshaping the political culture of Filipinos. I suggest that instead of showing during prime time those silly soap operas which don't help reorienting the political culture of Filipinos in any way, TV stations should show the news and current affairs program, which today are shown when most people are already asleep. Before we can expect people to begin acting together, it is necessary that they be awakened and enlightened about the issues around them. To be informed is an essential first step in reeducating Filipinos.

An informed and vigilant citizenry is essential for change. Knowledge can incite people to rebel against a government or to recreate themselves as they try to recreate society. It enables people to transcend their limitations and excel.

The reason we have not toppled the squatter in Malacañang is that we do not see a better alternative—not among the leaders of the opposition especially. Unfortunately, opposition politicians are the same as those who are in power right now. We need a leader with vision and integrity, a person who will listen to the call of the youth for genuine change.

Let us rise above our apathy and political mis-education and awaken the secret chords which empower every Filipino to rise above his limits. We may not change Philippine society suddenly and completely, but we can save it one day at a time by doing the small things that can transform a rotten system into a genuine democracy. Our youthful idealism may yet move the people to participate in the reform of our institutions and the reconstruction of our political and economic systems.

I am praying for our future. I am praying for a time when our politicians will serve the public interest, a time when greed and corruption will not control the hearts of Filipinos.

I refuse to inherit a government corroded by corruption, a constitution which doesn't serve the interests of the people, a society that has remained deaf to the desire for change. But I am afraid that one morning I might wake up to find myself disgusted, apathetic, tired and without hope for this country.

John Henry C. Liquete, 21, finished AB Political Science cum laude at St. Louis University in Baguio and is now a 2nd year student at the San Beda College of Law.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

More than money

"It's not just a question of giving financial help. The damage caused may be more than what you are willing to offer."

—Justice Sec. Raul Gonzalez on the victims of the Ultra stampede that left 74 dead

Mere photo ops

"Until now, we are only treated to photo opportunities by opposition leaders and members because their declaration to unify has not materialized."

—House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles

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Recall Proclamation 1071

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S Proclamation 1017 declaring a state of national emergency gives Filipinos another reason to rage against her arrogant administration.

With Proclamation 1017, GMA gives the military and police the power to do "whatever needs to be done" with whomsoever they consider enemies. The proclamation can therefore be used to silence all forms of criticism, even the media. It has paved the way for warrant-less arrests, capricious government takeover of utilities (including media outfits and facilities), and a total ban on rallies.

After the violent dispersal of rallies last Feb. 24, the Daily Tribune, which is known for its anti-government stance, was raided around 12:30 a.m. of Feb. 25. Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran and retired Gen. Ramon Montaño were arrested, and there were attempts to arrest five congressmen who were meeting in Sulu Hotel. What follows? Who else will be arrested and what other institutions will be taken over or gagged next?

Proclamation 1017 must be déjà vu for those who witnessed the events that preceded the Edsa uprising in 1986. Once again, this time, government authorities are showing their low regard for the citizens' rights, more particularly the freedom of expression. GMA is showing her true colors. The dark soul driving her administration and allies has revealed itself.

Also, it is ironic that the issuance of Proclamation 1017 should take place when the country was commemorating the 20th anniversary of the first People Power. And to think that it was another People Power that put GMA in Malacañang in January 2001. Kaalagad Katipunang Kristiyano, an ecumenical group that seeks total change in society, condemns all forms of suppression of people's rights and freedoms. Kaalagad calls for the recall of Proclamation 1017.

Walang pataasan, walang lamangan!

Isulong ang demokratikong pamayanan!

—FR. BEN MORALEDA,
spokesperson,
SINDHY OBIAS, campaign staff,
Kaalagad Katipunang Kristiyano,
kaalagadkk@yahoo.com

A chance for COA to be a hero

CONGRESS WAS RIGHT IN APPROPRIATING the recovered $640-million Marcos wealth for agrarian reform. However, the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo appears to have squandered the funds to serve her political ambitions and greed. The masses may also be right to now refer to the money as "double dead"—twice stolen.

Senate President Franklin Drilon should be commended for leaning on the Commission on Audit to immediately take an accounting of the funds and determine where they have gone after their turnover to the government by the Philippine National Bank. According to Drilon, the funds amounted to P35 billion, and most of the amount has been spent except the P8 billion reserved for the human rights victims of the Marcos regime.

The biggest scandal involving the fund was the P728 million released for the purchase of fertilizer, days before the 2004 elections. No farmers' organization has yet come out to admit that it did receive the funds. On the other hand, witnesses before the Senate committee investigating the fertilizer scam have testified that the money was distributed through congressmen, governors and mayors apparently to enlist their support for Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's presidential dreams, part 2. We have here an instance of public funds used to perpetrate election fraud and ensure the "victory" of a sitting President, thus undermining the very foundation of our democracy.

The COA should heed the call of duty and perform this one heroic act—if only to further the democratic cause of transparency in governance.

—CHELSEA ANSELMO,
157 J. Elizalde St.,
BF Homes Subd.,
Parañaque City

Case not appealed to La Salle president

THE LA SALLE GREEN HILLS COMMUNITY takes exception to the allegations made by Victor Agustin in his Feb. 15 and Feb. 20 columns.

To put things in proper perspective, may we point out that the complainant's parents did not personally approach our school president, Bro. Bernard S. Oca, FSC. They just wrote him a letter, which was dated Feb. 5, 2006 and signed by their legal counsel. The school responded with a letter, likewise through the school's counsel, given the legal dimension of the issue raised.

Prior to the appeal formally made by the parents in another letter (addressed to the grade school principal), dated Jan. 17, 2006 and received on Jan. 19, 2006, the incident in question had already been investigated by the assistant principal. The probe was immediately conducted after it was reported to him on Nov. 9, 2005. In fact, the Discipline Board convened by the assistant principal rendered its decision as early as Nov. 18, 2005, in accordance with the school's standard procedure in handling disciplinary cases.

The principal was aware of the case since she was furnished a copy of the investigation report and the violation reports served to the pupils concerned.

The principal met with the concerned parents on Jan. 20, 2006 upon receipt of their appeal on Jan. 19, 2006. During the meeting, the principal noted the general points raised by the parents. On Jan. 25, 2006, the parents were advised about those points that had been clarified with the assistant principal as well as the areas identified for further review. The principal then convened a review board, an independent body for that matter, on Jan. 27, 2006, precisely to address the concerns raised by the parents in their appeal.

The school emphasizes that Brother Oca has no direct role in the investigation conducted at the level of the assistant principal, who is in charge of the learning community to which the concerned pupils belong. Neither was the school president directly involved in the proceedings of the review board (at the principal's level).

The president only comes into the picture as the final arbiter of a case where the decision of the principal is appealed to his office. (But no such appeal in this case was brought to his office.)

As of this writing, the school has rendered a decision on the appeal to the principal and has accordingly informed the concerned parents.

—EVANGELINE D. TAMACA,
Grade School principal,
La Salle Green Hills,
Ortigas Avenue, Mandaluyong City

VAT like a vampire sucking nation's lifeblood

THE VALUE ADDED TAX, RAISED FROM 10 percent to 12 percent last February, is a cruel tax. As a tax that comes with each and every sale of goods and services, it taxes the individual from birth to death—that is, his or her hospital bills at birth and funeral services upon death; the bottled milk that he or she guzzles as an infant and the medicine that he or she gulps before his or her last breath.

It is a regressive tax because it hits everyone—rich and poor alike. Yet, our Constitution says that the Congress shall evolve a "progressive" system of taxation. A progressive system of taxation is one based on the "ability to pay"—meaning, the higher the income, the higher the tax that one pays. But as a group, the poor consume more than the rich (less than 10 percent of the population); therefore, they contribute more to VAT collection than the rich.

A study by the National Tax Research Center showed that the total revenue from indirect taxes, which are based on sales tax, is much bigger than the total revenue collected from the income tax. Thus, the poor pay higher taxes than the rich in proportion to their income. No wonder, the poor gets poorer while the rich get richer.

VAT gives government a vested interest in rising prices. The higher the prices are on gasoline, cooking gas, electricity, water, food and services, the more taxes it collects. And VAT is paid by the ultimate consumer.

It is hypocrisy for government officials to claim they do not want prices to go up; they benefit from it. Businesses, which initially collect the VAT, are exempted from it. The law allows them to reimburse their VAT payments from their VAT collections. That opens a wide window of opportunity for graft, because businesses can pocket the collections, or share it instead with the government collector. That is why the actual VAT collections averaged only 3 percent of the expected total VAT collection. Hence, revenue collections have dropped from 19 percent to 13 percent of GDP since 1998 when VAT was first imposed.

Credit agencies and banks are happy over the VAT rate increase because the higher the revenue government collects the better is its capacity to pay its loans and interests. Top government officials are happy because they can borrow more money, including foreign loans, which they can tap for graft. After all, the amortization payments won't be coming from their pockets.

Eighty percent of families that do not earn enough, according to an Ibon survey, are unhappy because they will have less food to fill their hunger, live under leaky roofs, and cut schooling for their children. Older people will face the possibility of dying much earlier for lack of money to pay their medicines, which now cost higher.

VAT is like a vampire that sucks the lifeblood of the nation.

—MANUEL F. ALMARIO,
mfalmario@yahoo.com

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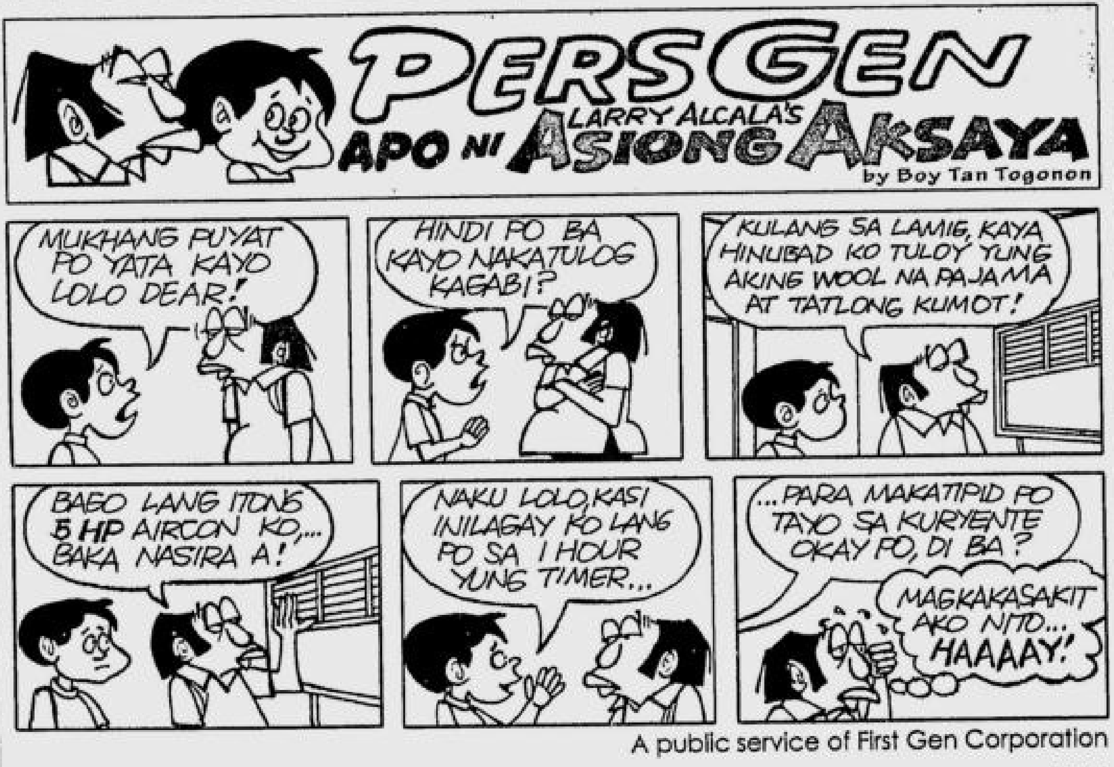
PERSGEN
LARRY ALCALA'S
APO NI ASIONG AKSAYA
by Boy Tan Togonon
MUKHANG PUYAT PO YATA KAYO LOLO DEAR!
HINDI PO BA KAYO NAKATULOG KAGABI?
KULANG SA LAMIG, KAYA HINUBAD KO TULOY YUNG AKING WOOL NA PAJAMA AT TATLONG KUMOT!
BAGO LANG ITONG 5 HP AIRCON KO,... BAKA NASIRA A!
NAKU LOLO,KASI INILAGAY KO LANG PO SA 1 HOUR YUNG TIMER...
...PARA MAKATIPID PO TAYO SA KURYENTE OKAY PO, DI BA?
MAGKAKASAKIT AKO NITO... HAAAAY!

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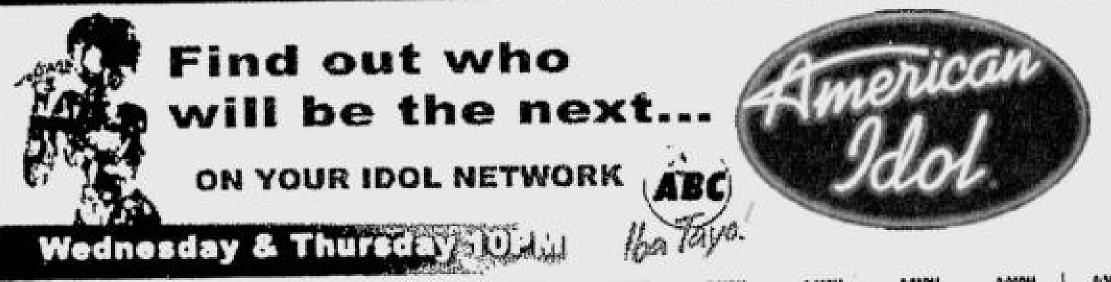
ADVT

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Tuesday, February 28, 2006



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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			WNCAA (Rerun)		World Pool League				Sentro	Mumbai Thrillers	ABC Action Movies				Big News	ALI		Billboard On-Air	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Amazing Twins		TV Patrol World	Gulong Ng Palad	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Prinsesa Lulu	Pinoy Big Brother		Bora			Insider
AXN		Las Vegas		Las Vegas		Maximum Exposure (Season II)		Lost		Numb3rs (Season I)		When Animals Attack		Alias		Mondo Magic Singapore	The World's Wildest Commercials	Totally Outrageous	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Tom & Jerry Show		Baby Looney Tunes	Codename: Kids Next Door	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Energy Bomb	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers
Cinema One		Kung Ayaw Mo Huwag Mo		Araw-Araw, Gabi-Gabi				Sana Pag-ibig Na				Videoke King				Curacha			
Cinemax		Beastmaster III: Eye Of Braxus			Japanese Story (4:45 PM)				Bean			Into The Sun			Tears Of The Sun (9:35 PM)				Against The Ropes
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport/MainSail	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Discovery Channel		I Shouldn't Be Alive		Rides		Battleground: The Art Of War		Zero Hour		Wild Discovery		Hour Asia		How Tech Changed The World With William Shatner		Zero Hour		Crime Stories	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-Talkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Phil Of The Future	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Ranger	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		2004 World Summit of Pool NY NY USA		World Pool League '02 Semi		Winter X Games Classic CO USA		Watersports Programming Hot Water		Table Tennis 2001 Killerspin Extreme	Sportscenter Asia	Sportscenter Asia	World Snooker Tour Grand Prix Finals						Sportscenter Asia
ETC	The Insider Weekend	Outback Jack		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		One Tree Hill 2		The O.C. 2		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	Catholic Social Teaching	Angelus (3:15 PM)	AllCatholic	Angel Force	Angels Of God	Rosary With Mother Angelica	The Gospel Of John	EWTN Gallery	Lord, Have Mercy	The Journey Home Encore		Council Of Faith	Good Or Evil, Who Decides?	Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Rome Reports	Web Of Faith	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	First Love Of A Royale Prince		Dragonball Z	Great Teacher Onizuka	La Robe de Mariage	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Encantadia	My Name Is Kim Sam Soon	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace		Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched	Mcleod's Daughters IV		Category 6: Day Of Destruction			Who's The Boss? II	Bewitched	The Nanny	Strong Medicine				Redeemer			Family Law III (10:25PM)		Strong Medicine (11:25PM)
HBO		Everyday People			Sinbad: Legend Of The Seven Seas			Suburban Madness			Highwaymen			American Pie: The Wedding			Lethal Weapon 2 (10:45PM)		
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Home Shopping Network		Legacy Of Hero		Japan Video Topics		Global Family Series	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Raw				The Batman	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Arrested Development	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central Presents	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert	Whose Line Is It Anyway?		Look For Less	Life & Style		Napa Style	Simply Wine With Andrea Immer	Guess Who's Coming To Decorate	
MTV Philippines	MTV Screen	Spring Break	Diyes		Punk'D	Pop Inc		MTV Hits				VH1 All Access: Lisa Marie Presley	Get Spotted	TRL		MTV Hits	Pimp My Ride	Bling # 103	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX Versions	MYX Finals	Star MYX	MYXLOG	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Top Of The Pops	Radio MYX	MYX News	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic	Wild Family Secrets	Seconds From Disaster		Is It Real?		Air Crash Investigation		Top 5 - Mysterious Universe		Wow!		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Air Crash Investigation		Seconds From Disaster	
NBN		Value Vision		New Life TV Shopping		Teledyaryo	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Siya?	Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo				Pasada Ngayon Na		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	Rocket Power	Four Eyes	My Life As A Teenage Robot	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	My Life As A Teenage Robot	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Lovelife				Lovelife				Brat Pack				Pangako Sa 'Yo				Uhaw Sa Init ng Pagmamahal
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Sister Hungry Heart	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Love At Aegean Sea	Irene	Mars	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	My Guardian Baby		News On Q	[illegible]		MINT (Music Interactive)	
RPN 9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Global Window				Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Real Gilligan's Island		The Cut		Paradise Hotel		Newswatch Now	Tuesday Night Treat		
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping				Oras ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports		WTA 2005 Philadelphia, Finals					Denmark Open Women's Singles Finals					NBA Game: 76ers at Mavericks					Sportsdesk	PBA Preview	NBA Jam
Sports Plus		PAC 10 Basketball, Washington vs Stanford				World Game		SMB Poker Bar Tour Finals				Ultimate Fighting Championship				World Cup Preview 1			
Star Movies		The Preacher's Wife				One Fine Day (5:10 PM)				Ever After: A Cinderella Story				Black Hawk Down			Me, Myself and Irene (11:20PM)		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Friends (Series 10)	Charmed		The O.C.		North Shore		Friends (Series 10)	Charmed
Studio 23		Aerobox						Get Backers	Spirits	Wazzup Wazzup	Andromeda		Smallville (8:20 PM)	Point Pleasant (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Cabinet split on ending state of emergency

From page A1

based on (Defense) Secretary (Avelino) Nonong Cruz's briefing, we might have to wait for a couple more hours or days and that they'll just give the signal when everything is clear," the trade secretary said.

Standoff

As early as Saturday, Favila said the economic managers had been telling the President of the need to lift PP 1017 considering that the markets had remained sober. *(See related story in Across the Nation, Page A14.)*

"She was just nodding her head. She was just listening," he said.

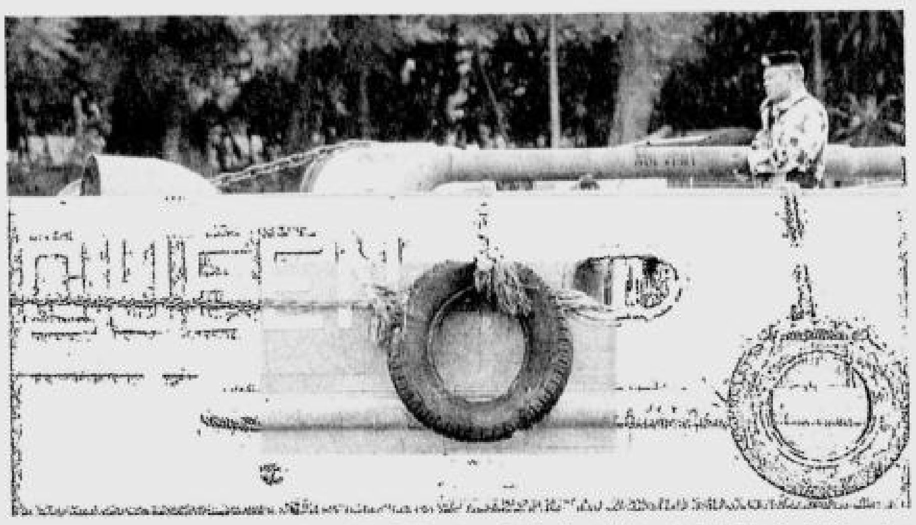
Were it not for the Fort Bonifacio standoff with the Marines on Sunday, Favila said the President would have lifted the proclamation "between now (Monday) and Wednesday."

"Until noontime Sunday, we were discussing the lifting. Then the Marines started calling for media coverage. We had to drop the issue entirely," the trade secretary said.

But with the standoff resolved before midnight Sunday and the peso and stock markets behaving normally yesterday, Favila and the economic managers revived their push for the lifting of the proclamation. *(See story on Page A1)*

Within normal range

Favila noted that the peso's and stock market's decline on Friday were well within the normal range of trading activity and was way different from the reaction in the 1989 attempted coup d'etat.



STRICT security measures enforced in Malacañang include a tight watch of the Pasig River by a Presidential Security Group member on board a barge. LYN RILLON

He said the bloody coup attempt in 1989 cost the country a 2.2 percentage loss in economic growth, P120 billion in business activity and P12 billion in tax revenues.

"The markets gave a good, encouraging sign that everything was back to normal," Favila said.

He said, however, that the economic team had "no debate" with the security cluster on the law and order situation because the latter might have more information than it had disclosed to the public.

He said a majority of businessmen reacted positively to the declaration of a state of emergency although there were some who complained that it was rushed and the public had been kept in the dark about its justification.

"If there was no concrete action taken, the market could have taken a tailspin and that would have been worse," Favila said.

Overreaction

But one of the country's biggest business groups blasted Ms Arroyo's declaration of a state of national emergency as contrary to the national interest and an "overreaction to events."

The Makati Business Club (MBC) said PP 1017 was issued amid Malacañang's insistence that the situation was under control.

"Just as we urge the government to immediately revoke PP 1017, we also urge the Armed Forces to continue upholding the Constitution," the MBC said in a statement. "Instead of preserving democracy, the proclamation threatens people's rights and freedoms reminiscent of martial law."

"The warrantless arrests, warnings and threats against media appear to be early indicators of a crackdown against voices of dissent," it said.

"The core problem lies in the lack of transparency and accountability of our political leaders (and) our sad state of affairs is the cumulative effect of controversy and cover-up, which include the 2004 elections, 'Hello Garci' tapes and the still unreleased Mayuga Report on military involvement in the elections," the group said.

The MBC, along with the Financial Executives of the Philippines and various civil society groups, called for Ms Arroyo's resignation in July last year when 10 Cabinet secretaries and high-ranking Malacañang officials demanded the same.

Guillermo Luz, the group's executive director, maintained that the MBC had not changed its position and believed that the social unrest was the result of the unresolved controversies. *With a report from Ronnel W. Domingo*

Markets upbeat nat'l emergency rule lifted soon

From page A1

were still willing to focus on positive market and corporate fundamentals rather than on political uncertainties.

"As the session unfolded, investors may have realized that the declaration of the state of emergency was opportune and the right action to take to maintain stability in the system," said Liboro.

Among the most actively traded stocks was blue-chip Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. that shrugged off the 3.6-percent loss suffered by its American depositary receipts in New York on Friday. PLDT closed 0.3 percent higher at P1,780, boosted by strong 2005 financial results that beat analysts' forecasts.

PLDT announced a record 2005 net profit of P34.11 billion, up 22 percent from the previous year, due to cost reduction and higher revenue from its cellular phone operations. *(See story in Business, Page B1.)*

Pilipino Telephone, a unit of PLDT subsidiary Smart Communications, rose 3.2 percent to P3.20 after the mobile phone operator also reported a record high 2005 net profit of P13.46 billion.

During Monday's session, gainers outnumbered losers, 60 to 16, with total trade amounting to P1.16 billion.

"A lot of investors felt the worst has passed," said Oliver Plana, head of sales at Asiasec Equities.

More difficult

Marcelo Ayes, Equitable PCI Bank chief foreign exchange trader, predicted the peso would climb back to its recent highs.

"The peso will resume the target of 51.66 in the coming days," Ayes said. The local currency hit a 3-½ year high of 51.42 against the dollar two weeks ago

Even so, Ms Arroyo said the abortive plot by her political enemies, communists and "military adventurists" meant her administration would now have to work three times harder to regain the momentum it had enjoyed in implementing fiscal reforms.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said plans to improve the country's finances would be more difficult to carry out after Ms Arroyo invoked emergency rule.

"It will probably make it a little challenging at this point in time," Teves, who took up his post in July last year as Ms Arroyo's fifth finance secretary in five years, told Reuters in a telephone interview.

"I'm hoping that things would settle down. But if it doesn't, I guess we just have to work a little harder and just get things clarified to the public and to the investors."

The sooner the better

Teves said the sooner the state of emergency was lifted, the better for the economic health of the Philippines, Asia's largest issuer of sovereign debt after Japan.

Trade Secretary Peter Favila on Sunday said the government's economic advisers had recommended the lifting of emergency rule to allay fears of investors.

Favila said he had assured operators of call centers that the government would not take over their businesses under Proclamation No. 1017.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said the declaration of a state of emergency was hurting government efforts to attract investments and create jobs.

A Taiwanese investment mission had canceled its Manila trip "because of the perception that it will be chaotic here," Sto. Tomas told reporters. "Apparently, they don't want to get caught up in trouble or be put at risk here."

Asked if she thought the emergency declaration should be lifted soon, Sto. Tomas replied: "We cannot exist under this cloud for a long time. I am sure when the situation normalizes, we can normalize, too."

Market analysts also said that favorable investor sentiment would depend on how fast Ms Arroyo could get things back to normal.

"That requires the speedy lifting of Proclamation No. 1017 and the President looking firm against conspirators without appearing paranoid," ING analyst Tim Condon.

Fiscal reforms

Teves said he hoped an improvement in the security situation over the long term would accelerate fiscal reforms.

The Arroyo administration aims to cut this year's budget deficit to P125 billion, or 2.1 percent of gross domestic product, with a higher sales tax and efforts to clamp down on evasion. The 2005 budget deficit was below target at P146.5 billion, about 2.8 percent of GDP.

Teves said his team would meet with senior military officials today. "The next two days probably should help clarify some uncertainties and unclear matters in our mind," he said.

Two of the three major ratings agencies upgraded their outlooks on the Philippines to stable from negative this month before Friday's declaration of emergency rule. Only Moody's Investors Service, which rates the Philippines the most harshly at four notches below investment grade, has kept its negative outlook.

Standard & Poor's on Monday said its rating on Philippine debt would stay at three notches below investment grade unless the situation was protracted.

"There are some political uncertainties and this is unfortunate," Ping Chew, S&P's director of sovereign ratings, told a teleconference. "If this remains unresolved, it could impact policy and reform efforts. It could induce negative sentiment."

Fitch Ratings, which rates Philippine debt at two notches below investment grade, said it remained comfortable with its stable outlook but was monitoring the situation.

"I do not want to sound alarmist but it is not difficult to envisage a worst-case scenario in the Philippines and obviously we would need to respond to that," said James McCormack, head of Asia sovereigns at Fitch.

Credibility

Other analysts said Ms Arroyo's decision to declare a state of national emergency had undermined the country's credibility, weakening it abroad and deterring badly needed investment.

"It has certainly sent many negative signals not only here but internationally," said Ben Diokno, a University of the Philippines economics professor and budget secretary under the short-lived term of former President Joseph Estrada.

"It won't be good for foreign investment … not now. The political uncertainty is too great," Diokno said.

Peter Wallace, a business consultant who has lived in the Philippines for more than 30 years, said that internationally televised footage of anti-Arroyo demonstrations on Friday exaggerated the small amount of violence that occurred and damaged the country's image.

"I think foreign investors who may have been sitting on the fence will be reluctant to invest now, and foreign investment is what this country desperately needs right now," Wallace said.

Net foreign direct investments for the first 10 months of last year amounted to $863 million, a 64-percent rise over the same period in 2004. But the Philippines still lags well behind the rest of its Asian neighbors. *With reports by Jerome Aning, Michele V. Remo, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Reuters and AFP*

Senators urge media to defy gov't control

From page A1

"If you want to control the civil liberties of the people, you start with media. That's what government is trying to do. They are now trying to curtail media as a start," Arroyo said.

Following the President's declaration of a state of emergency on Friday, the Philippine National Police raided the office of the Daily Tribune.

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao has also warned that police will take over media facilities if they do not comply with government standards.

Senate President Franklin Drilon, Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan and Senators Manuel "Mar" Roxas II, Rodolfo Biazon and Pia Cayetano yesterday filed a resolution seeking an inquiry into government acts in connection with Proclamation No. 1017.

Other senators have signified their intention to sponsor the measure.

Senators denounce raid

In the resolution, they condemned the police raid on the Tribune's editorial office and the arrest of private citizens, as well as lawmakers critical of the Arroyo administration.

The senators also maintained that a state of emergency neither suspended the Constitution nor limited civil liberties, basic human rights, freedom of the press and other basic rights enshrined in the fundamental law.

"How can we expect our people to adhere to the rule of law if the highest office in the land can so easily twist and circumvent the fundamental law to meet its desired ends?" Pangilinan said.

Earlier in the day, Liberal Party members in the Senate and the House of Representatives held a caucus and agreed to question on the floor the legality of government acts carried out in connection with the proclamation.

"This is an intimidating act. They first targeted Tribune. Who's next?" Biazon said.

News stories toned down?

"Do you know what I notice now? The stories have been toned down," he said, holding a daily. "Even the commentaries have been toned down. Which means the objective of the proclamation is now slowly being achieved."

Arroyo said any law, executive order or government action that ran counter to the constitutionally protected rights of the press, expression and speech "is unenforceable."

"Even if the people exercise free speech and expression, or assemble to redress their grievances, nothing will come out of it unless media reports it freely," he said.

"Thus, the President cannot, under the guise of national emergency or public interest, arbitrarily order the takeover or direct the news content of television or radio stations and thereby deprive the public of free and balanced information."

"Such an assertion of the government cannot prevail over the superior right of freedom of the press, expression and speech," he added.

NTC can't close radio, TV

Arroyo said the National Telecommunications Commission or any government body was not empowered to draw up guidelines on what electronic media could or could not air "because that amounts to prior restraint which is constitutionally impermissible."

"They can only regulate the airwaves but they cannot say that they will close (down radio or TV stations)," he said.

"I'm chair of the committee on public services and legislative franchises so I know it by heart. They do not have any power to oversee media," he added.

The maverick administration senator slammed Lomibao's threat to take over recalcitrant media.

"How can a policeman understand freedom of the press? He's a policeman," Arroyo said.

Total press ban not allowed

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said that even during a national emergency, "government may not impose a total ban on mass media" because free speech "occupies the highest priority in the hierarchy of constitutional values."

She said the constitutional provision that authorized the government to "temporarily direct the operation of any privately owned public utility or business affected with public interest" was not found under the constitutional article on the executive department, but "under the article on national economy and patrimony."

"This provision is applicable, not to a national emergency affecting political stability, but to a national emergency affecting the economy," said Santiago, also an administration senator.

"Since 1017 applies mainly to political emergency, the invocation of this economic provision has marginal relevance," she said.

"It cannot be used as a basis for restricting mass media, unless the media report is directly related to the promotion of a coup d'etat or rebellion," she added.

GMA urged to cease, desist

Saying that "those who wield the gun and not those who wield the pen" were its enemies, Sen. Ralph Recto advised Malacañang to "cease and desist" from taking actions which "abridge the freedom of the press."

He warned the Palace that it will lose "the battle for public opinion if it alienates through underhanded tactics the very sector that shapes it."

"Malacañang should not pick up a fight with those who buy ink by the barrel," Recto said.

"If democracy is under attack, then you tap the most potent weapon in its arsenal, which is a free press. You don't launch a counterattack on the media, but you use it in winning people over to your side," he said.

Recto said "democracy can never be invoked" in curtailing the freedom of the press.

Recklessly conceived

He described as "recklessly conceived" the assertion that some members of the media had "recklessly magnified" the "claims" of alleged conspirators.

"As far as I know, there were no screaming headlines calling on people to rise against the government," Recto said.

"On the contrary, it was media's untrammeled coverage of the demonstrations which probably saved the day for the government. If there was a news blackout, people would have believed the propaganda that a million people are massing up on Edsa," he said.

"But because the rallies were covered live by TV, they knew the real score."

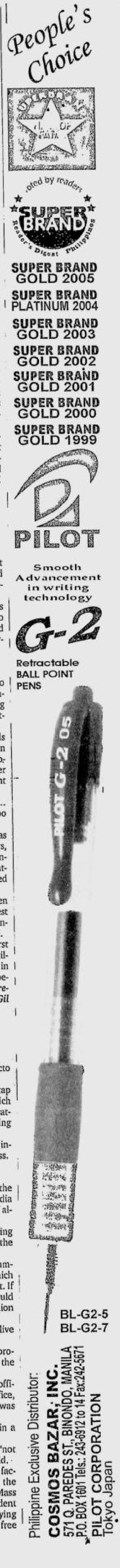
Recto said the people "know how to process information; they know chaff from the grain, substance from spin."

During the swearing in of a new set of officers of the PNP Press Corps in his office, Lomibao insisted that freedom of press was "not absolute."

"These are not normal times, we are in a state of national emergency," he said.

Media attacks on government were "not good for the economy," the police chief said.

In a statement signed by 124 students, faculty members and administrative staff, the University of the Philippines' College of Mass Communication demanded that the President rescind her emergency proclamation, saying "it clearly undermines the role of the free press in the country."



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Lift 1017, Mindanao traders urge GMA

DAVAO CITY—MINDANAO BUSINESS LEADERS have expressed concern over a prolonged state of emergency, saying it was beginning to be bad for business.

Although local business groups are supporting President Macapagal-Arroyo's declaration on Friday of a state of emergency, Romeo Serra, chair of the Mindanao Business Council (MBC), said on Friday a prolonged situation was bad for business.

Serra urged the President to lift Proclamation 1017, saying it had already "done its purpose" in foiling a purported plot to overthrow Ms Arroyo.

"With the state of emergency in effect, no tourist will come to the country because the statement itself is negative. Lifting it (declaration of state of emergency) will be better for the country, better for the economy, and better for business," he said.

Serra said the situation would gravely affect tourism and the financial sector, which had already been showing signs of takeoff before the declaration.

After the Asean Tourism Forum (ATF) in Davao, for instance, a number of tourism operators around the world were about to put Davao on the international tourism map, he noted.

"But after the declaration of state of emergency, how can you promote now?" he asked.

Australia and Hong Kong have issued advisories against travel to the Philippines following the declaration of the state of emergency.

But Serra said such advisories would have little effect on agribusiness, which comprises the bulk of Mindanao businesses.

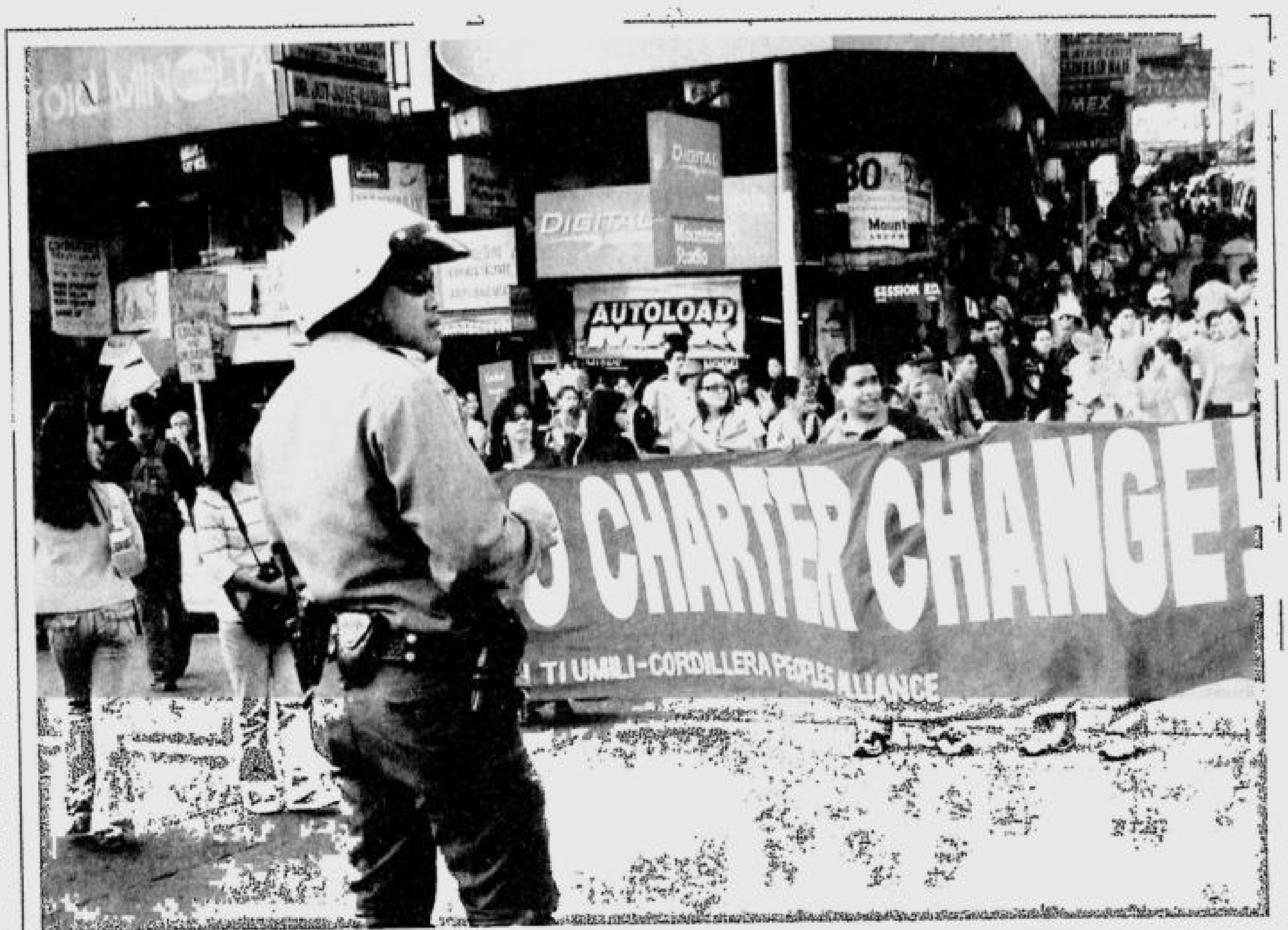
"While local businesses are aware of the real things happening in the country ... it is (investors from) foreign countries that will hesitate to come here because of the state of emergency," he said.

"If I'm a tourist operator booking 200 foreigners for a visit here, do you think that they will still come after the declaration?" Serra asked.

But he clarified that the business community fully supported the presidential proclamation. He said Ms Arroyo was just protecting herself against the threat of a coup.

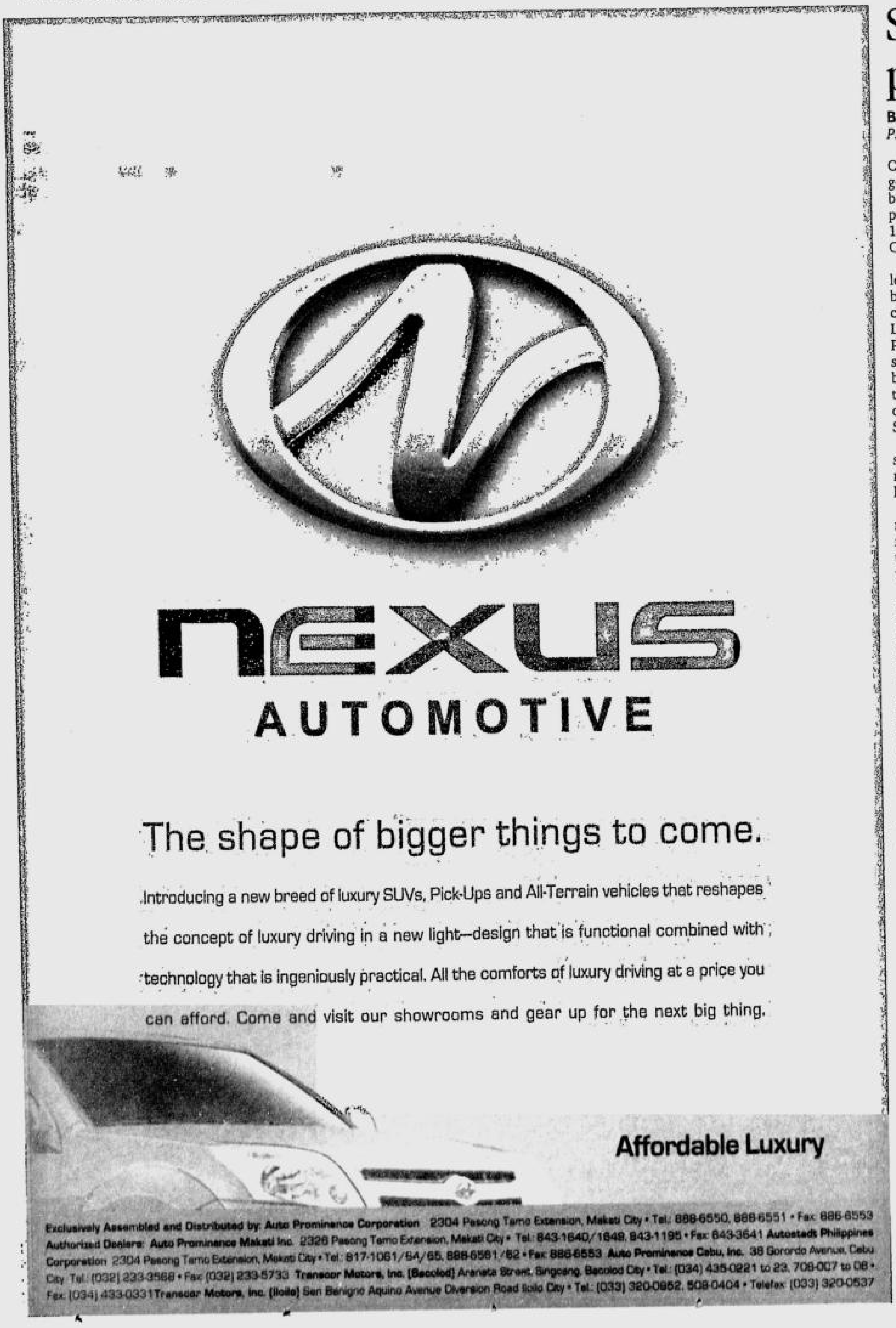
Since the plot had already been thwarted, it is now time for Ms Arroyo to lift it and restore normalcy, he said.

He said the declaration had already served its purpose and prolonging the state of emergency would send fears to the business sector. *Germelina Lacorte, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

PROTEST TARGET
A policeman stands in the way of a group of protesters in Baguio City demanding a stop to moves to amend the Constitution and calling for the ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo.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Scout Rangers housing project rites cancelled

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE government's promise of housing benefits has apparently failed to placate soldiers from the Army's 1st Scout Ranger Regiment in Camp Tecson in Bulacan.

Military officials said the alleged coup plot to be led by members of the regiment and their commander, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, was being planned even as President Macapagal-Arroyo was scheduled to grace the groundbreaking rites on Saturday for their off-base housing project outside the unit's headquarters in San Miguel, Bulacan.

An Army officer confirmed the scheduled event in which Ms Arroyo agreed to stand as guest of honor and speaker.

"It was cancelled for obvious reasons," the officer said, referring to developments that saw the President declaring a state of national emergency on Friday.

Saturday's ceremony was intended to boost soldiers' morale and highlight welfare support that Ms Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro launched for the elite soldiers in January.

Before the scheduled groundbreaking rites, Ms Arroyo had visited Camp Tecson twice to meet Lim and the Scout Rangers as coup jitters plagued her administration.

Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino, chief of the military's Northern Luzon Command, said the housing project was "not a form of bribe" to Lim's more than 200 men, as former President Fidel Ramos would like to believe.

"The Kawal Kalinga (housing project) has been going on for quite a time now. That for the Scout Rangers in Bulacan came late, however. But when a civilian donated a land for that purpose, the project for them began," Tolentino told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview on Sunday.

Nolcom documents showed other Kawal Kalinga sites in San Jose de Urquico near Nolcom's Camp Aquino in Tarlac City; Fort Bonifacio in Makati City; Cagayan de Oro City; Camp Riego de Dios in Trece Martirez City, Cavite; Cabanatuan City; Camp Lapu-Lapu in Cebu City; and Fort del Pilar in Baguio City.

All sites have been declared and approved by Ms Arroyo for the soldiers' housing needs, Nolcom reports showed.

Tolentino said the Barangay Tartaro site near Camp Tecson in San Miguel was not only intended for Scout Rangers but also for military retirees and government employees.

Asked why the Scout Rangers had figured in alleged plots to overthrow the government, Tolentino said: "I don't want to make any deduction. You have to study the background of the unit."

More Moro women wanting to leave for overseas jobs

COTABATO CITY—MORE MORO women have been seeking employment overseas in the past three years, authorities here said.

Lawyer Silvino Cinches, former director of the National Bureau of Investigation in Central Mindanao, said at least 200 Muslim women applicants for overseas employment clearances troop to the bureau's office here daily.

Cinches said many of the job seekers looked younger than the ages they had entered in their application forms. Many of them are between 15 and 18 years old, he said.

The Regional Commission on Bangsamoro Women in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao attributed this to perennial clashes between rebels and government soldiers, which affected the government's education program.

The regional Department of Education reported the need for 3,268 new classrooms this school year, but it had no funds for new school buildings.

Existing schools had been built only with congressional funds that were "scarce in terms of actual release" by the national government, said ARMM Education Secretary Udtog Kawit.

The Office of Muslim Affairs here corroborated the report provided by Cinches before he retired last week.

Most of the women applicants, records showed, came from the Maguindanao towns of Rajah Buayan, Sultan sa Barongis, Datu Saudi Ampatuan and Mamasapano and parts of Midsayap, Aleosan and Pikit in North Cotabato.

Schools in these areas are either flooded or have been destroyed in fighting between rebels and soldiers. *Nash Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Explosives package found in Taguig City mini park

By Jocelyn R. Uy

RESIDENTS OF TAGUIG CITY panicked after a package containing explosives was found in a mini park at noon yesterday.

The package was discovered by Leif Lapitan in the park at Barangay Sampaguita, about 75 meters away from the parking lot of the Market! Market! shopping mall, said Maj. Bartolome Bacarro, Army spokesperson.

But Southern Police District Chief Wilfredo Garcia described the explosives as "old" and "no longer combustible."

"The explosives were already drenched by rain and could have been dumped there for quite some time," Garcia said in a phone interview with the INQUIRER.

After Lapitan called authorities, a team from the Philippine Army's Explosive and Ordnance Battalion, together with the Taguig police, went to the area, city police chief Supt. Ramon Reyes said

Found inside the package were five dynamite sticks, two non-electric blasting caps, a two-meter time fuse and a blue plastic container.

"The explosive device was successfully defused with no untoward incident," Bacarro said in a statement.

Reyes said the explosives may have been placed there "just to create panic," in the wake of President Macapagal-Arroyo's move to declare the country under a state of national emergency, and one day after a six-hour standoff between groups of Marines in Fort Bonifacio.

It is also possible that the package was abandoned by people involved in dynamite fishing or small-scale mining who happened to pass by the area, he added.

"Since security in the area has been tight in the past few days, they might have wanted to avoid being caught and arrested for possession of illegal explosives," Reyes told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The military and the police have set up checkpoints in three areas around Fort Bonifacio the past few days.

Security measures were intensified on Sunday when a group of restive Marines protested the relief of their commander, Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda.

They returned to barracks shortly before midnight after the issue was resolved.

Quest for justice not over

By Tina G. Santos

THE FATHER OF MARK CHUA, an engineering student who was killed after exposing alleged anomalies at the University of Sto. Tomas' (UST) Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), had forgiven one of the suspects in his son's murder two weeks before he passed away.

Welson Chua, Mark's father, died last Thursday after a heart attack. He was 43.

Former intelligence agent Mary "Rosebud" Ong, a relative of the Chuas, said suspect Eduardo Tabarilla, 25, asked for forgiveness from Welson, after he was sentenced to serve six to 12 years in jail for Mark's murder in 2001.

"I forgive you. You killed my son, you took away his life but now I'm giving you your life. Believe in God and lead a good life," Ong quoted Chua as telling Tabarilla.

Chua's wife, Amet, however, said that even without her husband, her quest for justice for their son's death will go on.

"We are not about to give up running after the others who have not been caught. Welson may have forgiven our son's killers, but the pursuit of justice remains," she told the INQUIRER.

Two other suspects, Joseph Tan and Michael Von Rainard Manangbao, remain at large. The four suspects were also ROTC cadets from the UST.

The first suspect to be arrested, Arnulfo Aparri Jr., was convicted for Mark's murder in March 2004 and sentenced to death.

After Mark's exposé, his body, which bore torture marks, was found floating in the Pasig River on March 18, 2001.

METROBRIEFS

A 'clean' attack

ILLUSTRATION STEPH BRAVO

A MAN attacked his neighbor in Pasay City on Sunday, armed, of all things, with a dustpan. The police said Joel Zamora was walking along Mulawin Street in Barangay Maricaban at around 5 p.m. when his neighbor, Miguelito Ramil, blocked his path and attacked him with the dustpan. Zamora suffered several injuries in the head and body and had to be brought to the Pasay City General Hospital for treatment. Ramil, meanwhile, escaped.

Jocelyn R. Uy

Special trash collection for a fee

QUEZON City lawmakers are toying with the idea of making city-run garbage services available to private facilities for a fee. A proposed ordinance has been filed authorizing the local Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department (EPWMD) to accommodate requests by private groups for its services, particularly the use of garbage trucks on special trips. Five councilors, led by Restituto Malangen, said many factories produce a lot of waste which could not be accommodated during the regular garbage collection service, prompting them to engage the services of private firms. For every trip using a 10-wheeler dump truck, the EPWMD can charge P6,000 and P3,000 per trip using a mini dump truck, the councilors suggested. The revenues will go to the city's general fund. The other proponents of the ordinance are Rommel Abesamis, Eric Rey Medina, Francisco Calalay Jr. and Janet Malaya.

DJ Yap

Mandaluyong targets cigarette vendors

IF plans push through, Mandaluyong City officials will not only go after cigarette smokers but also the people who sell them on the streets. Officials are now studying the possibility of amending an existing city ordinance against smoking in public places, the public information office reported yesterday. The City Anti-Smoking Task Force recently announced its operatives had arrested 1, 729 smokers last year, almost 90 percent of whom were jeepney drivers. City Ordinance No. 279-2004 bans smoking in enclosed offices of public buildings, schools, malls, hospitals, clinics, business establishments as well as in jeepneys, taxis, tricycles and even pedicabs.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Where was Secretary Cruz during the standoff?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE STANDOFF AT THE MARINE headquarters in Fort Bonifacio was clear proof that some people were out to overthrow the government of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Defiant Marine Col. Ariel Querubin himself admitted to media that some members of the elite force, in full uniform, would have marched at Edsa side by side with the opposition and militant groups to air their sentiments against the administration.

Had they done that—even if they were not armed—that would have been tantamount to a mutiny.

Querubin's plan, and the revelation by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga that the Army Scout Rangers were to have taken part in the fray, was enough to justify Proclamation No. 1017.

Proclamation 1017 was an act of self-defense on the part of Arroyo's government.

Had the declaration of a state of emergency excluded the stifling of media, the citizenry would have understood. It was an overreaction on the part of the Arroyo government.

But, oh well, in a life-and-death situation overreaction is better than no reaction at all!

* * *

President Arroyo would be well advised to let the media report the news as they see fit, not according to what she and her subordinates want it reported.

The biggest mistake she made was in having the Philippine National Police threaten newspapers and other media outlets that it would look at the contents of their stories.

Closing down *The Daily Tribune* is reminiscent of Marcos' martial law, on a smaller scale.

If the President continues to stifle the media, she places herself in an embarrassing position because media will continue to defy the gag order.

* * *

Malacañang deftly handled the standoff at the Philippine Marine Corps headquarters by letting its top officers settle the problem among themselves.

It would have been a tragic mistake had Army troops been sent to quell the potential rebellion.

The rivalry between the Army and the Marine Corps would have blown up into a shooting war had the Army stepped into what was an internal affair among the Marines.

* * *

I can't understand why Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda was relieved as Marine commandant when it was he who dissuaded Col. Querubin from pushing through with his plan to march at Edsa with some troops.

If the charge against Miranda was that he didn't have Querubin taken into custody—as Senga did with Rangers chief Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim—remember that the Marines are a very closely knit group.

Marines treat one another more than brothers, the close relationship born in combat.

Miranda, considered a father by the Marines, probably had the misguided "son" Querubin cool off before taking him into custody.

However, Brig. Gen. Nelson Allaga, who replaced Miranda, is another highly respected officer. So, the Marine Corps is still in good hands.

* * *

Where was Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz during the Fort Bonifacio crisis?

Unlike his predecessor, Angelo Reyes—during the Oakwood Mutiny—Cruz was nowhere near the Marine headquarters. Reyes was in the vicinity of the Oakwood apartelle during the Oakwood standoff from start to finish.

I have it on good authority the President ordered Cruz to make his presence felt at Fort Bonifacio during the standoff.

Oh well, what do you expect from a pampered lawyer who never wanted the job of defense secretary?

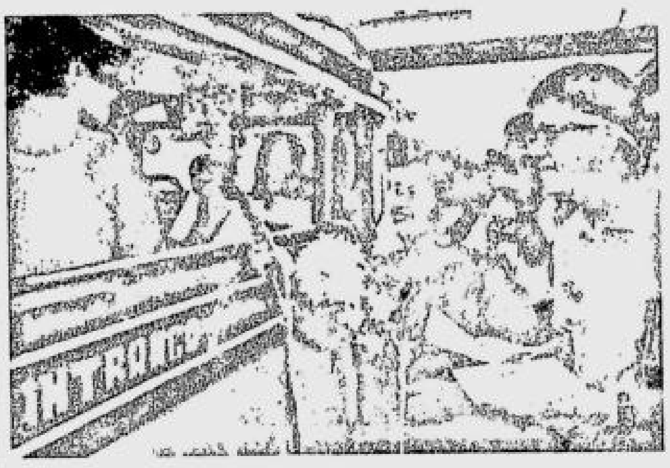
ITIGIL ANG DESTABILISASYON!

ANG **KONGRESO NG MAMAMAYAN**, isang pambansa at malawak na alyansa ng mga samahang mamamayan, ay nagpapahayag ng lubos na pagsuporta sa lahat ng desisyon at aksyon ng Pangulong Gloria Macapagal Arroyo upang iligtas ang Republika sa bantang kudeta at lahat ng uri ng destabilisasyon na nais isagawa ng mga pwersang nais mang-agaw ng kapangyarihan sa mga pamamaraang labag sa Saligang Batas.

Ang posisyong ito ng **KONGRESO NG MAMAMAYAN** ay nakapaloob sa aming sama-samang pinagkasunduang "Deklarasyon ng Intramuros" noong Pebrero 22, 2006 na nagsasaad ng:

KAUGNAY SA DESTABILISASYON AT BANTANG KUDETA:

Lalabanan namin ang anumang uri ng destabilisasyon at pang-aagaw sa kapangyarihan na labag sa batas at mga demokratikong proseso. Hindi-hindi kami papayag na mananaig at maghahari ang anumang uri ng diktadura, maging ito ay sa anyo ng hunta militar o konseho at iba pang uri ng awtokratikong pamahalaan na hindi direktang pinili ng mamamayan sa pamamagitan ng malayang halalan. Sa abot ng aming makakaya, ipagtatanggol namin ang demokrasya.



TIWALA KAMI na ang tanging layunin ng pagdedeklara ng "state of national emergency" ni Pangulong Arroyo ay upang salbahin ang bayan sa higit pang pagkakasadlak sa kahirapan, kundi man kaguluhan at karahasan. Ang binalak na kudeta at pagtatayo ng isang hunta na nakamaskarang

"transition council" ay isang uri ng diktadura at awtokratikong pamamahala.

Mahigit isang taon nang pinagbibigyan ang mga grupong nais magpabagsak sa pamahalaan ng lahat ng pagkakataon – sa lansangan, sa Kongreso, sa media at sa iba pang larangan – upang malayang ihayag at ilunsad ang kanilang mga pakana at balakin. Ngunit nabigo silang makuha ang suporta ng mamamayan.

Sa kanilang desperasyon, isang kudeta ang nais nilang isagawa sa mismong araw ng anibersaryo ng Edsa 1, na tahasang pambabastos sa naturang okasyon pagkat ang nais nilang itayo kapalit ng pamahalaang halal ay isang hunta na nagtatago sa anyo ng "transition council."

Ang nasa likod ng destabilisasyon at kudeta ay mga grupong may iba-iba at salungat na mga ideyolohiya't paniniwala. Tiyak nito, kapag naagaw nila ang kapangyarihan, sila-sila mismo ang maglalabanan at magpapatayan. Ano ang mangyayari sa bayan? Ano ang mangyayari sa aming ordinaryong mamamayan?

KAYA NAMAN ang **KONGRESO NG MAMAMAYAN** ay sumusuporta sa mga desisyon at pagkilos ng Pangulo upang mailigtas ang bansa sa higit pang kapahamakan, at maibalik ang Pilipinas sa landas ng pagbabago, kaunlaran at katiwasayan.

ITIGIL ANG DESTABILISASYON!
MAGKAISA, LABANAN ANG KUDETA!
PROBLEMA SA KAHIRAPAN, HARAPIN NA!

KONGRESO NG MAMAMAYAN

MULTISECTORAL ORGANIZATIONS
Action Manila
Aguman National, Inc.
Aksyon Sambayanan
ALAB PA! (Alyansa ng mga Benepisyaryo ng Pamahalaan)
BPA (Balikatan People's Alliance)
GMA (Grand Masa Alliance)
KAISAMBAYAN (Kaisahan ng Mamamayan Para sa Bayan)
KALIPI (Kasama sa Paglingap sa Mamamayang Pilipino)
KAPAKANAN (Kalipunan para sa Kapayapaan at Nasyonalismo)
KGMA (Kaibigan ni Gloria)
KGMA-Quezon City
KILOSMASA (Kilusan para sa Masa)
KKK
KMMR (Kilusan ng Mamamayan para sa Matatag na Republika)
Ladies in Action
Lakas Pinoy
Mahal Ko, Bayan Ko Foundation
Maluwalhating Pilipinas
PAR-ACT (People's Action and Response Against Corruption)
PGBI (Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc.)

SECTORAL ORGANIZATIONS
BABAE KA! (Babae Para sa Kaunlaran)
FIMDA (Filipino Muslim and Democratic Alliance)
KAMANGGAGAWA (Kaisahan ng mga Manggagawa Laban sa Kahirapan)/ Coalition of Labor
NACTODAP (National Confederations of Tricycle Operators and Driver Association of the Philippines)
NMPOC (National Muslim for Peace and Order Council)
SHABAB-Bangsamoro
TODA Pilipinas
Veterans (World War II, Veterans Legionaries of the Philippines, Inc.)
YACAP (Youth Against Corruption and Poverty)
YPAD (Youth for Peace and Development)

OFW ORGANIZATIONS
Akbay Pinoy
Alyansang OFW
Kaibigan ng OCW's, Inc.
KAKAMPI (Kapisanan ng mga Kamag-anak ng mga Migranteng Mangagagawang Pilipino, Inc.)
Kalahi International
OFW federation Pangasinan
OPA Koalisyon (Overseas Performing Artists Coalition)
PRIME (Philippine Resource Institute for Migrant Empowerment, Inc.)
UFS (United Filipino Seafarers)
USSWAPI (United Seafarer's Wives Welfare of the Philippines, Inc.)

URBAN POOR ORGANIZATIONS
CATMON HOA (Samahan Tungo sa Kaunlaran ng Catmon)
DAMATA (Damayan ng Maralitang Tahanan)
KADIMA (Kapisanang Diwa ng Mahihirap)
KOMPIL (Kongreso ng Maralitang Pilipino)
LMT (Lakas ng Maralita ng Tonsuya)
Masa Bansa
Samahang Nagkakaisa
Tondo Alliance

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATIONS
Agraralan Reform Beneficiaries Association of the Philippines
ALMARIZ (Alyansa ng Mamamayan ng Rizal)
Central Luzon Farmers Organization (CLFO) – Nueva Ecija
CPMARS (Cebu Province Multisectoral Alliance for Reforms and Stability)
Federation of Land Reform Farmers, Inc. (FLRF) – Tarlac
IMA Foundation, Inc. – Angeles
KAISAMBAYAN—La Union
La Union Vibrant Inc. – La Union Chapter
Lakas Pinoy – Mindanao
Lakas Pinoy – Visayas
MAPS (Mindanao Alliance for People's Solidarity)
Metro Clark Cooperative Union (MCCU)—Pampanga
Mindanao Cooperative Congress
OFW Council Inc. Region 1
Sapalibutad Homeowners' Association, Inc.
Small Coconut Farmers Federation of Region IX
STAGES – Batangas (Southern Tagalog Alliance for Genuine Empowerment and Services)
STAGES – CALABARZON
STAGES – Cavite
STAGES – Laguna
STAGES – Oriental Mindoro
Tertary La Union Market Association

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NBI gives ABS-CBN Wednesday deadline

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) yesterday gave ABS-CBN officials until tomorrow to appear before the bureau and submit their sworn affidavits in connection with the ongoing probe into the "Wowowee" stampede at the PhilSport arena in Pasig City that left 71 people dead on Feb. 4.

The bureau had issued subpoenas last week to several top officials of the television network and "Wowowee" staff members, but only a team of lawyers, headed by ABS-CBN chief counsel Regis Puno, appeared before the NBI yesterday to ask for a one-week postponement of the investigation.

"In view of the anxious developments in the country over the weekend, we have been unable to properly prepare and confer with our clients in connection with the investigation being conducted by your office," Puno and his associates said in a letter addressed to NBI National Capital Region chief Ruel Lasala.

Lasala, however, said they have to speed up their investigation because the Department of Justice had given the bureau only until today to complete the probe.

NBI seeks extension

"Because of this development, we will ask Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to extend the original deadline," Lasala told reporters in an interview. He added that Puno had promised to bring their clients before the NBI tomorrow.

"The ABS-CBN officers have the option to send their lawyers to the bureau with their sworn statements and affidavits, but it would be better if they appear personally before the NBI to answer our clarificatory questions," Lasala said.

The NBI official also said they expect the ABS-CBN lawyers to produce copies of "Wowowee" episodes from Jan. 30 to Feb. 3 and raw footage of the stampede tomorrow.

Lasala said they also requested a copy of the TV network's organizational structure, which would show the scope of duties and responsibilities of ABS-CBN officers and "Wowowee" staff members.

The NBI NCR had earlier issued subpoenas to ABS-CBN Executive Vice President for Entertainment Charo Santos-Concio; "Wowowee" host Willie Revillame; Rene Luspo, vice president and security head; Rey Cayabyab, assistant location manager; Mel Feliciano, "Wowowee" staff; Harold James Nueva, associate producer; Owen Garcia, segment producer; Marilou Almaden, production manager and business unit head; Morly Nueva, executive producer-manager; ABS-CBN Assistant Vice President for Entertainment Socorro Vidanes; "Wowowee" director Norberto Vidanes; the head of Goldlink Security Agency; and a still unidentified location manager.

VACC recommendation

Meanwhile, officials of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) recommended the filing of charges of reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide against several officials of the TV network and the Pasig City government.

The group said it based its recommendation after conducting a separate probe into the Feb. 4 stampede at the PhilSports Arena.

VACC officials said charges should be filed against ABS-CBN chief executive officer Eugenio "Gabby" Lopez III, Santos-Concio, Revillame, Luspo, Almaden and Feliciano.

Pasig City officials led by Mayor Vicente Eusebio, former Pasig police chief Senior Supt. Raul Medina, and PhilSports Arena security head Arnulfo Awa should also be charged, VACC founding chair Dante Jimenez said.

"There is more than probable cause to indict these people," Jimenez told reporters. He said his group would fully cooperate with the NBI on the case.

"But if the investigative agency and the Department of Justice come up with questionable results on the probe, we would still go after ABS-CBN and Pasig City government officials by filing separate charges against them," Jimenez said, adding that they were able to gather evidence against the subjects through personal written accounts of witnesses and victims.

Class suit suggested

The VACC report also suggested that a class suit be filed by the victims "to prevent the occurrence of a similar event."

Asked to comment on the VACC report, Puno said the VACC "is not the proper investigative agency. The proper investigative agency is the NBI."

Around 45 stampede victims who went to the NBI yesterday to give their statements on the incident also underwent counseling conducted by a medical team from the National Center for Mental Health (NCMH).

NCMH nurse Thelma Barrera said the VACC, through the Department of Health (DOH), had invited the team to facilitate "debriefing sessions" among the victims.

Counseling for victims

She explained that through these sessions, the victims could express their feelings and recover more easily from the severe trauma brought about by the incident.

"People who have been through critical situations such as the PhilSports stampede often experience depression, post-traumatic stress disorder or anxiety attacks," Barrera said.

She noted that two of the victims were possibly at risk for post-traumatic stress disorder and were experiencing hallucinations, sleeplessness, and severe anxiety.

VACC president Martin Diño earlier said that one victim, who was covered by dead bodies during the stampede, still had a hard time sleeping at night and would scream whenever she would feel somebody touch her in her sleep.

Barrera said the psycho-socio team, composed of 10 nurses and psychologists from the NCMH, conducted a two-hour group session to evaluate the victims' mental state.

TV staff affected

According to Puno the "Wowowee" staff were also traumatized by the Feb. 4 incident.

"Most of the staff members were in shock while we interviewed them after the stampede," he said.

Puno added that some of the game show personnel would break down after recalling scenes from the stampede.

"They are also undergoing counseling sessions like the victims," the lawyer said.

Lasala said they had gathered 71 autopsy reports and 820 medical certificates from the Quirino Memorial Medical Center, Pasig City General Hospital, Rizal Medical Center and Medical City.

"We are expecting the number of medical certificates to reach 1,000," he added.

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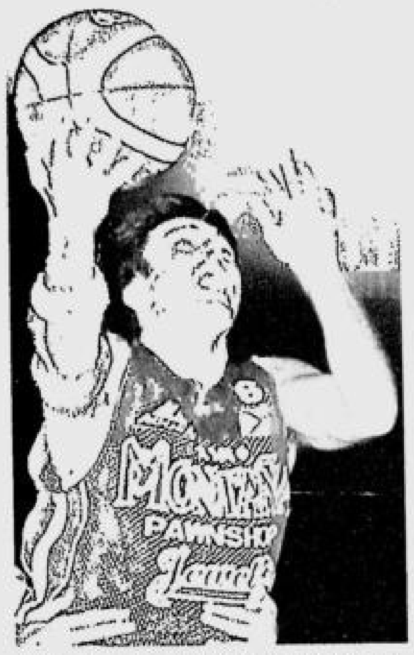
Eala backs Compton bid to play

Popular American expatriate ready to suit up for Welcoat



ALEX Compton: PBA dream within reach.

By June Navarro

TWICE DENIED IN THE PAST, ALEX COMPTON HAS found a solid backer in his bid to fulfill his dream of playing in the Philippine Basketball Association.

The league's board of governors yesterday took a positive stand on the request of Welcoat Paints to bring in Compton when the Wellbest franchise makes it debut in the PBA next season.

And no less than commissioner Noli Eala is backing the move.

"For the best interest of the league, I'm in favor of giving Compton a chance to strut his wares in the PBA," said Eala after the board's regular monthly meeting at the Red Table restaurant in Pasig City.

Although a full-blooded American, Compton has been playing for Montaña Pawnshop in the Philippine Basketball League as a "local."

The genial, 5-foot-11 playmaker made it to the limelight in 1998 when he saw action for the Manila Metrostars in the now-defunct Metropolitan Basketball Association. Compton won the league's MVP honors in 1999.

"The board has deferred action on his case for now," said Eala, following the meeting which also finalized the format of the coming All-Filipino Cup and the formal acceptance of Welcoat in the league. "It will be studied very carefully before the board makes a decision."

Compton's case has a precedent. Americans Cisco Oliver and Billy Robinson, both married to Filipinas, donned the Mariwasa jersey in the defunct Manila Industrial and Commercial Athletic Association (Micaa) tournament as locals from 1975-79.

"The league will provide the guidelines and the conditions to be imposed on Compton and Welcoat," said Eala. "We will also look at the precedents."

After Welcoat took over the Shell franchise, owners Raymund Yu and Terry Que made a pitch to include the 32-year-old Compton in the Paintmasters' roster, along with three other amateur players.

Sources said Welcoat also plans to elevate Jay-R Reyes, Junjun Cabatu, Ernie Sagad and Ronjay Enrile to the pro ranks.

Meanwhile, the board has approved an overseas game in Hong Kong, a year after the PBA held its first game abroad in Indonesia.

Eala said the Hong Kong game on March 19 will feature Talk 'N Text against a still undetermined opponent at the 4,000-seat Queen Elizabeth II Stadium in Wan Chai District. The match will be presented by PLDT Global.

Eight provincial games are also on tap in the Gran Matador Brandy All-Filipino Cup, Eala added.

In a related development, the planned national basketball federation convenes today to discuss the first draft of the group's constitution and by-laws.

Eala said the body, which includes the PBA, will meet two more times before its constitution is submitted to the Philippine Olympic Committee for approval.

Portmasters tapping more college stars

By Jasmine W. Payo

MAIERHOFER

HARBOUR CENTRE is tapping two more collegiate stars to boost its campaign in the PBL Unity Cup which kicks off next month.

Ryan Araña and Rico Maierhofer, who have played key roles in La Salle's UAAP campaign, will join the Portmasters in their bid to improve on their fourth overall finish in the last conference.

Maierhofer was one of the top rebounders and block shot artists in the UAAP last year. The lanky 6-foot-4 forward averaged 6.2 points, 6.6 rebounds and 1.5 blocks per game.

Araña, who normed 9.1 points and 5.2 rebounds last season, was among the Archers' backcourt threats.

They will join a team already boasting Ateneo's LA Tenorio, La Salle's Joseph Yeo and Jerwin Gaco and University of the East's Marcy Arellano.

Team manager Erick Arejola said, however, that the Portmasters are still planning to beef up their frontcourt.

"Rico can help us in that department but we still need one dominant center," he said. "We're hoping to get one before the start of the tournament."

Harbour Centre has always turned to young talents since its debut last year. Among its previous recruits were La Salle alumnus Mac Cardona and former Ateneo standouts Larry Fonacier and Paolo Bugia. All three cagers have moved on to the pros.

Meanwhile, the league will conduct a Rookie Camp at 1 p.m. at the Reyes Gym in Mandaluyong tomorrow. Deadline for application is also set tomorrow at 12 noon.

League commissioner Chino Trinidad designated Joey Guanio, a veteran PBA player, to handle the camp where coaches and scouts will be given a chance to see the skills of the prospective rookies.

Players are advised to bring their playing uniforms.

Interested parties may call 667-3008 to 09.

SWEET THIRTEEN: Victorious members of the Canlubang squad flash the V-sign as team manager Luigi Yulo (fourth from left, standing) receives their trophy from Henry So Uy, special assistant to the Philippine Airlines chair and EVP for commercial group, during the 59th PAL Interclub awards rites at The Venue restaurant in Davao City Saturday night. With the Sugar Barons, winners of the regular men's Championship division for a record 13th time, is Domeng Duerme, (second from left, standing), chair of the organizing committee. BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

'Why would Peping quit POC job?'

By Marc Anthony Reyes

COJUANGCO

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE WILL continue to function under first vice president Monico Puentevella if POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco is arrested for his alleged involvement in the destabilization of government.

But neither Puentevella nor secretary general Steve Hontiveros would comment on the political issue, saying the situation involving Cojuangco was "way out of the boundaries of sports."

Cojuangco has been linked by Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye to the destalibization effort, along with ally Pastor "Boy" Saycon, following the series of citizens' mass actions during the 20th anniversary celebration of Edsa I recently.

But the five-time Tarlac congressman and brother of former president Cory Aquino denied the Malacañang charges. "I already have my hands full with sports matters," Cojuangco said on national television.

POC spokesman Joey Romasanta also dispelled talk that Cojuangco would give up his POC position. "Why would he?" he said.

"He talked to me this morning," said Hontiveros of Cojuangco. "But there wasn't any urgent issue to discuss regarding sports."

Puentevella said he would meet with Cojuangco today to discuss the Sports Summit in June.

"I don't want to make any comment, this is a sensitive issue," said Puentevella, a known ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee under Cojuangco is still pooling the reports of all committees after Games where the country emerged overall champion for the first time. Philsoc reportedly owes certain companies P100 million in hotel and airline bills and supplies used during the Games.

Orcollo grabs 2nd straight US crown

ORCOLLO: $12,000 richer

ROVILLE, CALIFORNIA—FILIPINO Dennis Orcollo is on a roll.

The Philippines' newest billiards sensation bested US-based Filipino legend Jose "Amang" Parica, 9-3, Sunday night to rule the World Championship Bar (9-Ball Open) Table Tour at the Gold Country Casino and Hotel here.

The victory, worth $12,000, was a big follow-up to Orcollo's victory in the International Pool Tour qualifying tournament last week where he secured an IPT card for the 2006 season.

After topping the eliminations, Orcollo beat five-time US champion Johnny Archer in the semifinals, 9-3, to gain a twice-to-beat advantage in the finals.

Parica beat Archer in the losers' bracket for the right to challenge Orcollo.

Now past 50, Parica managed to grab the first game, 9-7, but Orcollo took the second game, 9-3, to emerge champion.

"I'm hitting the ball pretty well," said the 27-year-old Orcollo. "My win in the IPT last week boosted my confidence."

Meanwhile, Warren Kiamco beat American George Breedlove, 10-8, to also earn an IPT card and pocket the $13,000 champion's purse in the fourth leg of the IPT 8-ball shoot-out qualifying event at the Country Club in Boston, Massachusets, over the weekend. *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

Gonzales wins but Mariano loses

FILIPINO INTERNATIONAL MASTER JAYSON Gonzales won his match but countryman GM Nelson Mariano II dropped his game in the third round of the IX Open International Malaga de Ajedrez Sunday night in Malaga, Spain.

Making up for a draw with Francisco Miguel Terron Elena of Spain in the second round, Gonzales took the scalp of Luis Fernandez Siles, to score 2.5 points and share sixth to 19th places.

Mariano bowed to Fide Master Maxime Aguittaz of France in the third round and was stuck at 1.5 points.

In the fourth round, Gonzales tackles Serbian IM Slobodan Kovacevic while Mariano battles Diego Borrego Gil of Spain.

Five players, including top seed GM Oleg Romaishin of Ukraine, share the lead with a perfect 3.0 points. *Marlon Bernardino*

Ateneo XI nips La Salle, bags UAAP title

ROGER LASTIMADO BLASTED HOME the game-winner in the eighth minute of injury time as Ateneo nipped archrival La Salle, 1-0, Thursday and nailed its third straight UAAP men's football title at the PhilSports field in Pasig City.

Lastimado emerged from a mad scramble inside the box to boot in the rocket that grazed the goal post before hitting the back of the net.

"Beating La Salle in the championship match is a lot sweeter than winning (the title) via a sweep," said Ateneo coach Ompong Merida, whose team bowed to the Archers in 1997, the last time the two sides met in the finals.

The Archers had earlier prevented an Ateneo sweep by foiling the Eagles in their 10th and final match.

In women's play, La Salle beat University of Santo Tomas, 2-1, Wednesday to annex its fourth straight crown.

Ateneo's Patrick Ozaeta was named Most Valuable Player while La Salle's Vaughn Mellendrez won the top scorer award with eight goals. Far Eastern U received the Fair Play Award, while Tamaraw striker Jovanie Simpron won the Rookie of the Year honors.

La Salle's Stephanie Pheasant took her second women's MVP award, while UST's Maricris Ignacio was named Rookie of the Year.

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Best of motorsports in 2005 feted tonight

THE BIGGEST NAMES IN PHILIPPINE motorsports gather at the Airport Casino Filipino in Parañaque tonight for the gala ceremonies honoring the top drivers last year in the 3rd Golden Wheel Award.

Special guest Narzalina Lim, general manager of the Macau Tourism Office-Philippines, will award the Golden Drivers of the Year trophy in the national and international category.

"This annual awards night serves as a tribute to the achievements of the country's motorsports heroes and an inspiration for these drivers to reach greater heights," said Golden Wheel Award Foundation chair Johnny Tan.

The champions in the various motorsports disciplines are Jody Coseteng (touring cars), Glenn Aguilar (motocross), Michele Bumgarner (karting), Pepon Marave (Asian Formula Three); Jolet Jao (road racing), Leo Joel Cordero (drag racing), Alex Perez (rallye), Daryl Flores (slalom) and Albert Monte de Ramos (4x4 off-road racing).

BUMGARNER

COSETENG

From among these champions will be chosen the Golden Wheel National Driver of the Year award.

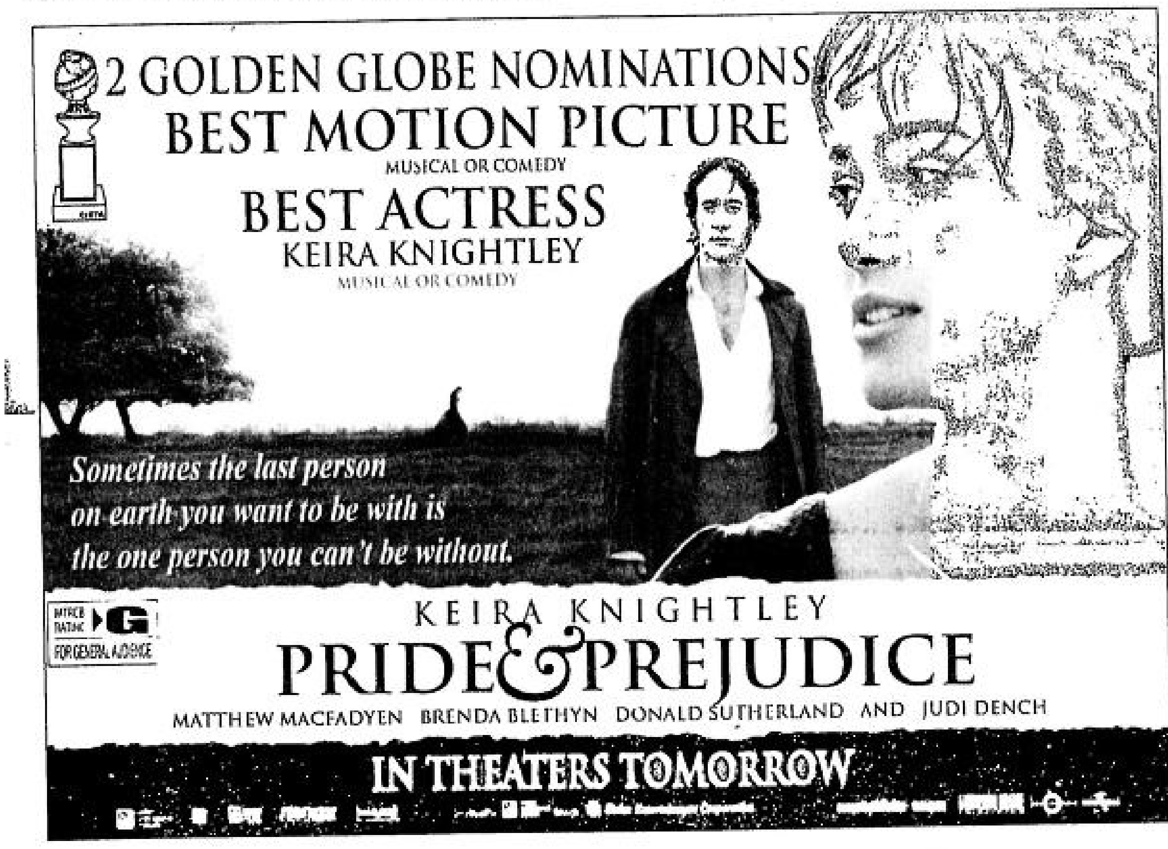
The nominees for the Golden Wheel International Driver of the Year are Bumgarner for winning the Asian karting championship for the third year in a row, Glenn Aguilar for clinching the championship in the Asian series for NAMSSA-Team Philippines, and Tyson Sy for his brave fight in the AF3 where he emerged the top Filipino finisher.

Bumgarner won the Golden Wheel Award top plum the last two years. Aguilar and Marave are aiming for their second trophy since winning it in 2004.

To be hosted by Popong Andolong and Pia Boren starting at 8 p.m., the event is backed by Casino Filipino, Yokohama, Pilipinas Shell, Denso and San Miguel Corp., Automobile Association of the Philippines sporting commission chair Mandy Eduque and FIM-UAM vice president Macky Carapiet.

Rendole outkicks veterans Luzon, Espiritu

OSCAR RENDOLE OF TEAM SPORTS RADIO/RELI TOURS SURprised two fancied rivals in ruling the centerpiece event of the Philamlife Cycling Search Invitational (CSI) Criterium Race in Marikina Heights over the weekend. Rendole, a non-finisher in the kickoff race in Tarlac last month, upstaged Tour veterans Bernard Luzon and Victor Espiritu in the 21-lap race. He gained 10 sprint points and totaled 25 points in the elite and under-23 event. Luzon finished second with 16 points, while Espiritu, who placed 10th in the Asian category in the recent Langkawi Tour, settled for third with 15 points. Completing the top 10 finishers in the men's elite and under-23 division of the event, organized by Treo Sales and Management Corp., were Vergel Muena, Jay Tolentino, Lloyd Reynante, Emil Pablo, Dante Cagas, Joel Calderon and Alfredo Asuncion. Mayor Ma. Lourdes Fernando and Vice Mayor Marion Andres, MD fired off the five-division event presented by Philpost. Former Tour champion Rolando Pagnanawon topped the 18-lap masters category, besting fellow Tour veteran Placido Valdez. Nicanor Ramos finished third. Bryant Villaroman reigned supreme in the 18-lap youth division.


2 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS
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BEST ACTRESS
KEIRA KNIGHTLEY
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Sometimes the last person on earth you want to be with is the one person you can't be without.
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KEIRA KNIGHTLEY
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MATTHEW MACFADYEN BRENDA BLETHYN DONALD SUTHERLAND AND JUDI DENCH
IN THEATERS TOMORROW

PBA player rigodon — and more

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

THE ONGOING RIGODON OF players in the PBA is but a reflection of the teams' tenacious desire to win the league's final conference of the season.

It must be that the trimming down to two conferences from the old three-conference format has built a bitter yearning for a crown among the eight teams in the country's only play-for-pay loop.

So, look what you've done, Pareng Noli?

Well, with several records shattered in the first conference—record crowds, handsome TV ratings and all—your new formula is proving to be too honest to be true.

From Air21, the surprise third placer in the San Mig Coffee-Fiesta Conference, the deal was for Wesley Gonzales and Homer Se to be dispatched to San Miguel and Purefoods, respectively. But the stunner was Express coach Bo Perasol's ploy to send John Ferriols to Talk 'N Text in exchange for Mark Telan. I'm a bit shaken by this considering that Telan was a consistent starter for the Phone Pals under coach Joel Banal.

But then, there's a new coach at TNT—Derrick Pumaren. Thus, I would assume Derrick is no Telan fan. Or, maybe, he sees Telan as not a key part of his player rotation and Ferriols, an inside operator with a sneaky jumper from the perimeter, is.

Oh, well, I remember again what the legendary Danny Florencio, now based in San Francisco, used to say when he was still around: "You are good only if your coach thinks you are good."

Red Bull should be the natural spearhead in what it feels as the cornering of "choice cuts" since winning the next conference would give the Bulls a sweep of the championships. Thus, when coach Yeng Guiao nabbed the power-leaping Richie Alvarez from Alaska, the move immediately became the talk of the town.

I say that because when Alaska plucked Alvarez from the ruins of the Shell disbandment, the move drew flak from the handlers of Alvarez—the reason being that Alvarez getting shipped to Alaska was allegedly done surreptitiously.

There were nerves frayed, relationships disturbed. Alas, even a friendship that's been there for years had been dented—forever, it seems.

But, as we all love to say, that's all water under the bridge now. Alvarez has found a new home, a home that should prove to be more than comfy for the 2005 Rookie of the Year. Why, because with Alvarez, a certified Ateneo star before turning pro, now with Red Bull, he has been reunited with his Ateneo teammates Enrico Villanueva, Larry Fonacier and Paolo Bugia.

The quartet had conspired to make Ateneo the UAAP champion in 2002. Had Wesley Gonzales also been traded to Red Bull, we would have seen Ateneo's starting unit in 2002 re-enacting their act at Red Bull in the next conference.

Each time I think of these Ateneo stars, I remember MVP a.k.a. Manny V. Pangilinan. That's because MVP is generally acknowledged as the No. 1 backer of Ateneo, financial or otherwise. Easily, he could recruit these—and other potentials from Ateneo for that matter, like L.A. Tenorio later—if he wanted to. Why he did not has remained a mind-boggling question to this day.

Anyway, the PBA will open its second conference on Sunday, March 5, but before that is an appearance in today's PSA Forum by commissioner Eala to discuss the details of the season-ending event.

Likewise, in the same forum, Pareng Noli will bare details of a PBA game in Hong Kong on March 19, featuring Talk 'N Text against an unnamed team. Also at the same forum today, Welcoat will be officially announced as the league's ninth member. Leo Austria, the well-loved mentor at Shell, will coach Welcoat, but as to who will be his deputies remains a mystery.

Things are looking up, indeed, in the league we all love and here's a wish for another smashing success in the coming conference.

* * *

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

SPORTS WATCH

Marist cagers gain Cherifer hoops finals

HOST MARIST SCHOOL worked behind a trapping defense to down International Christian School, 36-26, and grab the last ticket to the National Finals of the Cherifer Tangkad Sagad Basketball tournament. Giuseppe Vergara scored nine points to lead the Antipolo-based Marist School, but it was ICS wingman Dylan Tolentino who came away with a game-high 18 points in the tourney supported by Adidas. The 12-under boys of Marist head coach Jerome Maramag earlier beat Don Bosco-Mandaluyong, 22-8, while ICS nipped Don Bosco-Makati, 21-19, in the semifinals. Marist joined San Beda-Manila, Imus Pilot School of Cavite and St. Scholastica Academy of Pampanga in the National Finals set Mar. 11 at the Festival Mall in Alabang.

Poker Tour seeks more satellite tilts

THE PHILIPPINE POKER Tour hopes to hold more satellite tournaments in Casino Filipino sites to enable more poker aficionados to qualify for the main event of the Million Peso Hold-Em Philippine Championship set April 8-9 at the Airport Casino Filipino-Parañaque. Poker Tour chair Rey Gamboa has been holding talks with officials of the Philippine Amusements and Gaming Corp. to increase the number of tournaments. "We would like to thank Pagcor for its cooperation and support in our goal of promoting poker as a non-wager sport," said Gamboa. "Over 200 players have joined the ongoing non-wager satellite tournaments being held at San Mig, Alabang Town Center, Valle Verde Country Club and Rajah Park Hotel, Cebu City. Aside from the P1 million prize, the winner of the main event will bring home the Champion's Bracelet and the title as the First Hold'em Philippine Champion. For details, log on to www.PhilippinePokerTour.com or call the secretariat at 817-9092 or 812-0153.

60 fights up in Roligon 4-cocker

AT LEAST 60 FIGHTS will spice up the "Boy 2 Sa Roligon" 4-cock derby today at the Roligon Mega Cockpit. Derby host Boy Valenzuela said cockers from Pasig, Pateros, Marikina, San Juan, Pasay and Makati, as well as breeders from Rizal and Bulacan will dispute the P300,000 cash pot. Meanwhile, more than 200 entries have already confirmed for the P2-M "Largahan 5-Cock Derby" on March 11, 14, 16 and 18, said host Rolly Ligon. For inquiries, call 833-1638, 851-2275 or 852-9812.

Two big SJC derbies draw top entries

THE COUNTRY'S FINEST cockfighters are expected to compete in two tough derbies scheduled at the San Juan Coliseum tomorrow and on March 8. The Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines 5-cock derby unfolds on Wednesday with Sagupaan Complex-or 3000 as sponsor. Submission of weights will be today from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. On March 8, congressmen Butch Pichay, Jing Paras and Nonoy Libanan play host to a fund-raiser billed as the "55K Big Event 5-cock derby." For inquiries, call 725-5369.

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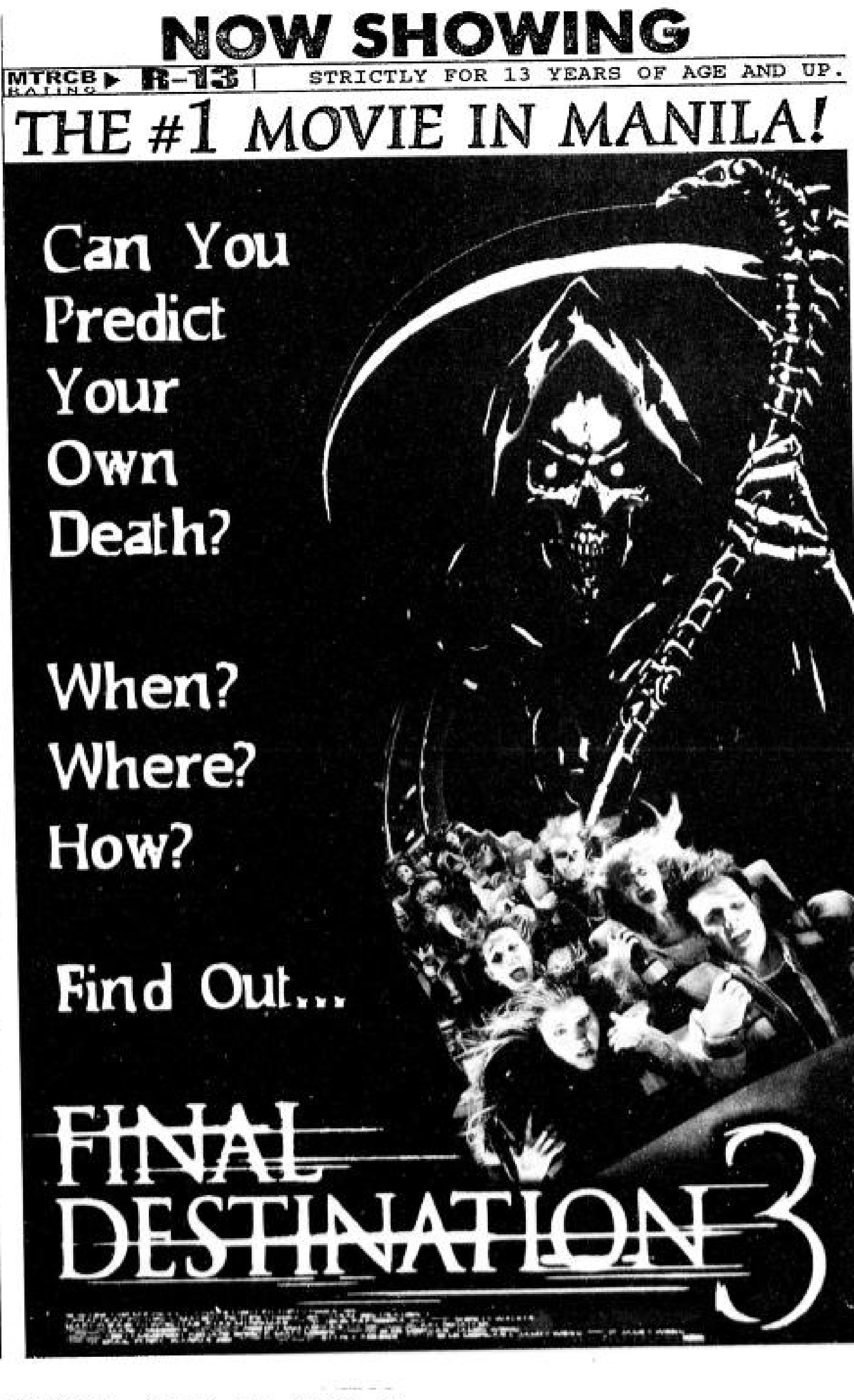
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Korea glows, Japan fades in Olympics

TURIN—SHORT TRACK SKATER AHN HYUN-soo inspired South Korea's best Winter Olympic medals haul in Turin but Japan had a miserable Games, with Shizuka Arakawa capturing its only medal when she won the women's figure skating.

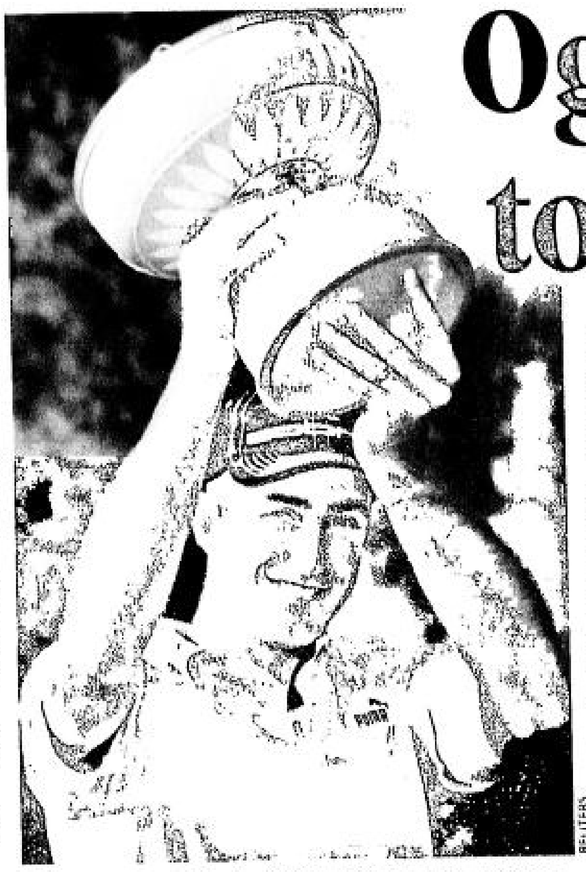
China fell somewhere in-between its two Asian neighbors in terms of success, claiming its first gold on snow when Han Xiaopeng bagged the men's freestyle skiing aerials title yet only equaling their two golds of four years ago.

Ahn took gold in the men's 1,000, 1,500 meters and relay as well as a bronze to help Korea amass six golds, three silvers and a bronze in short track while it claimed one bronze in speed skating after winning two golds and two silvers overall in 2002.

However, Japan's one medal looked pitiful for a country which has twice hosted the Winter Olympics.

When Japan held the Games in Nagano in 1998 it took five golds, one silver and four bronze medals.

In fact, Arakawa saved Japan from its worst Winter Games showing in 30 years when she unexpectedly became the first Japanese to win a figure skating gold, beating favorites Irina Slutskaya and American Sasha Cohen. *Reuters*



REUTERS

GEOFF Ogilvy: Richer by $1.3M with Match Play victory.

Ogilvy spurns Love, tops Match Play tilt

CARLSBAD, CALIFORNIA—AUSTRALIAN Geoff Ogilvy beat Davis Love, 3 and 2, here Sunday to complete a surprising run to the WGC Match Play Championship title.

Ogilvy, who appeared on his way out of the elite $7.5-million event on several occasions, needing extra holes to triumph in his first four matches, encountered smooth sailing in the 36-hole final against Love.

Love, the 23rd seed, was seeking redemption after finishing runner-up two years ago to Tiger Woods, who was eliminated on Friday.

There were 12 times when, had either his opponent made a putt or had Ogilvy missed, the Australian would have been eliminated.

He escaped each time, and won his semi-final against US Ryder Cup captain Tom Lehman in convincing fashion before subduing another major champion in the final.

"Each one of those extra hole matches I felt pretty fortunate to get through," said Ogilvy, who collected $1.3 million for just his second professional victory, 52 weeks after winning in Tucson on the same day as last year's final.

"My opponent had a putt to knock me out of the tournament every single time and no one made one. Something was on my side this week, keeping their putts out of the hole and making mine go in the hole.

"I didn't play out-of-my-mind well. I've played better before, but I got it done, hit shots when I needed to hit them, and I missed probably one putt I'm annoyed I missed."

The loss extended Love's victory drought, which has now lasted since 2003.

"I just didn't hit enough good iron shots when I had to and Geoff did," Love said. "I let him get away from me 3-up a couple of times, and you can't do that, even in a 36-hole match.

"It was not a good day, but a good week and I take a lot of confidence from it. I'm driving it great, good enough to win any week. If I can drive it like that at places like the Masters, I'll do real well."

Love made two mistakes that proved pivotal. He had a four-footer at the 14th hole in the morning to go 2-up, but missed it, which was a huge psychological boost to Ogilvy.

"It was a bonus at the time," Ogilvy said. "The momentum was going his way a little bit." *AFP*

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Dancing Ballerina (8), Cool Cielo (7), Lord Gold (6), Honey Ur Mine (3)
Race 2—(Penta/Tri)—Modern Spirit (9), Sutter's Quest (2), Real Tough (7), Run Like D'Wind (4), Perky Perp (10)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Ole! Ole! Ole! (3), Red Phoenix (2), God Is Good (4), Master Kenneth (1)
Race 4—(Penta/Tri)—Dixie Dash (5), Makati Haven (10), Western Dancer (1), Tervalac (8), Jazz In Time (3)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Madam Cognac (1), Floral Arch (5), Cebuna Spell (7), Alexis Magic (4)
Race 6—(Super Six/Tri)—Miss Vicky (4), Virgin Island (9), Dazzling Affair (8), Mister Cool (14), Shutler (11), Long Hitter (6)
Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—Eye Candy (4), Jedi (6), Striker (7), Ilocos Pride (5)
Race 8—Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Valid Hazm (10), The Dominator (3), Sweet Felicity (13), Sweet Peanut (11), Do It David (4), Double Your Bet (1).

Pistons down Cavs for best mark

NEW YORK—CHAUNCEY BILLUPS had 21 points and eight assists and Ben Wallace hauled down 19 rebounds as the Detroit Pistons won their fifth straight game, downing the Cleveland Cavaliers 90-78 on Sunday.

Detroit won for the 12th straight time at home and improved to an NBA-best 46-9, including a 26-2 mark at home.

The Pistons lead the Central Division by a whopping 14 1/2 games over the second place Cavaliers, with the teams meeting again Monday night in Cleveland.

Wallace added 11 points with five blocks and four steals and played his usual tenacious defense for the Pistons, who led 44-33 at the half and by 15 points after three quarters.

"They did a great job taking us out of our offense," Cleveland coach Mike Brown told reporters after the game. "Ben (Wallace) is quick, athletic, strong, tenacious and hungry—the whole nine yards," Brown added.

The Cavaliers didn't help their cause by making 20 turnovers in losing for the third straight time. Cleveland never led and battled double-digit deficits for most of the game.

Richard Hamilton had a strong overall game for the Pistons, contributing 18 points, seven assists and six rebounds.

LeBron James led the Cavaliers with 22 points, nine rebounds and seven assists. *Reuters*

COMPLETE RESULTS: Detroit 90, Cleveland 78; Minnesota 105, Memphis 99; Houston 89, Orlando 84; Indiana 101, New Jersey 91; Boston 112, LA Lakers 111; New Orleans 88, Portland 75.

SOLAR Sports will air the Philadelphia-Dallas tussle at 9:30 a.m. today with a replay at 8 p.m.

NETS' Nenad Krstic (left) is fouled by Pacers' Scott Pollard in their NBA game.

REUTERS

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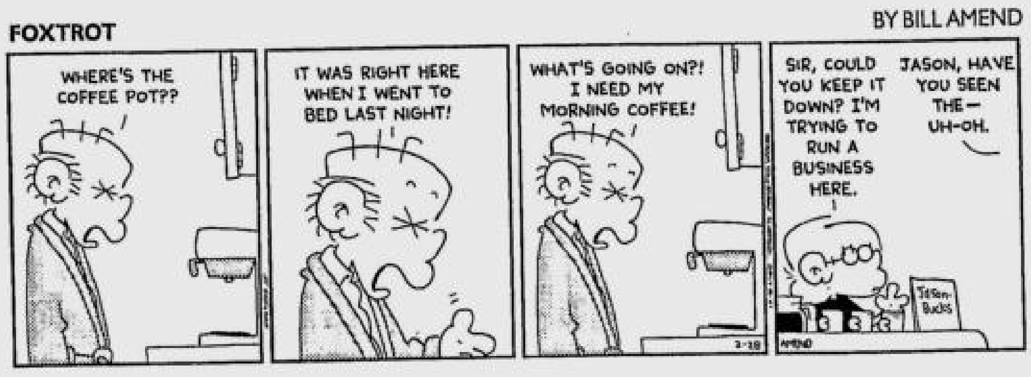
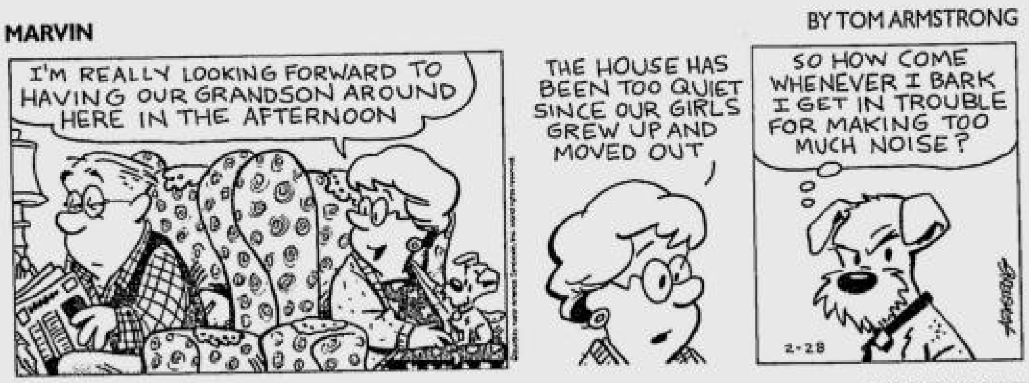
BY BILL AMEND


WHERE'S THE COFFEE POT??
IT WAS RIGHT HERE WHEN I WENT TO BED LAST NIGHT!
WHAT'S GOING ON?! I NEED MY MORNING COFFEE!
SIR, COULD YOU KEEP IT DOWN? I'M TRYING TO RUN A BUSINESS HERE.
JASON, HAVE YOU SEEN THE— UH-OH.
Jason-Bucks
2-28

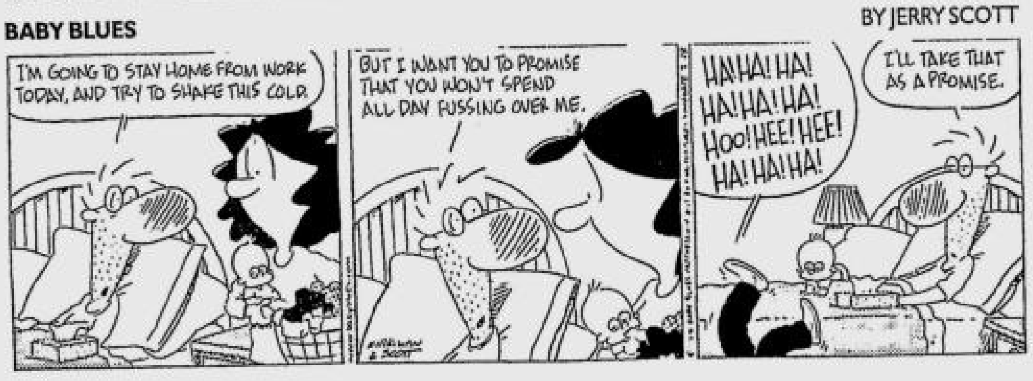
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I'M REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO HAVING OUR GRANDSON AROUND HERE IN THE AFTERNOON
THE HOUSE HAS BEEN TOO QUIET SINCE OUR GIRLS GREW UP AND MOVED OUT
SO HOW COME WHENEVER I BARK I GET IN TROUBLE FOR MAKING TOO MUCH NOISE?
2-28

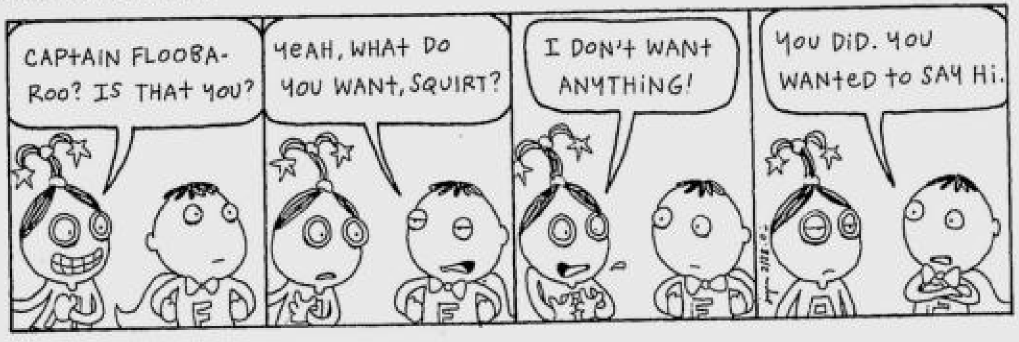
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I'M GOING TO STAY HOME FROM WORK TODAY, AND TRY TO SHAKE THIS COLD.
BUT I WANT YOU TO PROMISE THAT YOU WON'T SPEND ALL DAY FUSSING OVER ME.
HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HOO! HEE! HEE! HA! HA! HA!
I'LL TAKE THAT AS A PROMISE.

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


CAPTAIN FLOOBA-ROO? IS THAT YOU?
YEAH, WHAT DO YOU WANT, SQUIRT?
I DON'T WANT ANYTHING!
YOU DID. YOU WANTED TO SAY HI.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're dynamic, vibrant and interested in everything. You have a certain joie de vivre that attracts others to you. You're not afraid to attempt what others say is impossible. You get more out of life than virtually anyone, because you demand it. In the year ahead, focus on your closest relationships and partnerships. **Birthdate of:** Rae Dawn Chong, actress; Mario Andretti, race-car driver; Linus Pauling, two-time Nobel Prize winner (for chemistry and peace).

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You can get an amazing amount done today, because your focus is steady and straight as an arrow. You know what you want, and you're not afraid to ask for it. You're a force to be reckoned with!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're in a hardworking, industrious mood. You'll do whatever it takes to get the job done. This is a good day to buy practical items for the long-term future for your home.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): It's very easy for you to be patient today. You can really put your shoulder to the wheel. You're willing to give up time today to get results for tomorrow.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You will probably get the most done today by working alone or trying to be in isolation. You're determined to accomplish something. You will diligently research whatever you seek.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Join forces with someone older or more experienced than you today. This partnership can be productive! Why not learn from the mistakes of others?

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You're willing to cooperate with authority figures today. You feel strong, but at the same time, you want to show deference to those whom you respect.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Everything having to do with publishing, travel and dealing with foreign countries and the media will be productive today. You're a stickler for details.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You've got a good head for finances and how to share things with others. You're very sensible about meeting people halfway today. You feel very reasonable.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Talk to partners and close friends about travel plans, dealing with foreign countries, publishing matters and anything having to do with higher education. You will defend your best interests in a quiet, reasonable way.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Do work today that requires steady, persistent effort. You have what it takes. You'll get lots done!

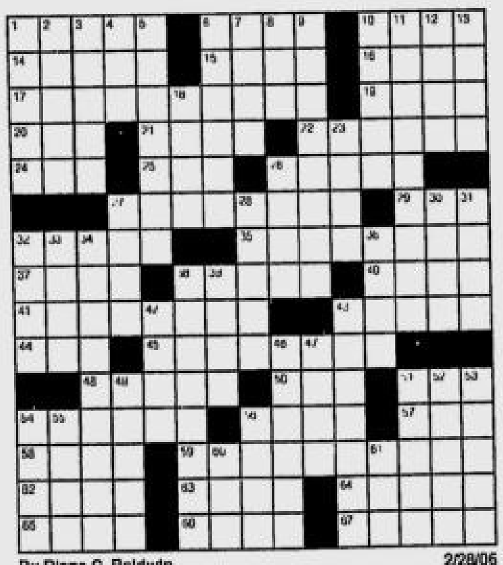
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is an excellent day to give form and structure to your creative efforts. It's also a good time to plan for the long-term care of children.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Domestic disputes can be settled reasonably today. You're looking for practical, long-term solutions at home or in family matters today. You have the energy to do a lot of work.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Steps element
6 Teach's title
10 Sailor's shout
14 Roast host
15 Overhaul
16 Perspiration opening
17 Puts up a front
19 In a fresh manner
20 Id's partner
21 Travel stops
22 Way out
24 Novelist Deighton
25 Crackpot
26 "__ what you think!"
27 Pulling contest
29 Chit letters
32 Gift recipient
35 Lather removals
37 Food thickening agent
38 Fair-haired
40 Sleeper spy
41 Three-hulled boat
43 Bamboo stems
44 Sushi delicacy
45 Waking fantasy
48 Geneva populace
50 Shade provider
51 Contribute
54 Military trainees
56 Life of Riley
57 Sibling, for short
58 Medicinal plant
59 Shapes, as an agreement
62 Indecent
63 Topmost spot
64 Accounting inspection
65 Camera part
66 Go at a gallop
67 Run-down

DOWN
1 Ward off
2 Public persona
3 Descendant
4 Yet, poetically
5 Entourage
6 On the double
7 Ups the RPMs
8 Pindaric creation
9 Racket stroke
10 In isolation
11 Sharpens one's focus
12 Smeltery piles
13 Evergreen shrubs
18 Close-fitting
23 Needlefish
26 Castor to Pollux
27 Contract condition
28 Palm leaf
30 Goggle at
31 Functions
32 Prom partner
33 Grimm creature
34 Pinpoints exactly
36 Mosque leader
38 Military officer
39 Deposits eggs
42 Collier's entrance
43 Paparazzi equipment
46 Hole-enlarging tool
47 Last word in an ultimatum
49 Thistles and burrs
51 Dwelling place
52 Ancient Welsh priest
53 Bonkers
54 Telephone
55 Nautical direction
56 Madame Bovary
60 Breeze through
61 Bring legal action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By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD

2/28/06

Monday's Puzzle Solved

T	I	B	E	T	■	A	N	T	I	■	V	A	S	T
E	M	O	T	E	■	B	O	W	S	■	I	G	O	R
A	F	O	U	L	■	A	R	I	A	■	S	I	R	E
■	■	M	I	L	E	S	A	N	D	M	I	L	E	S
I	R	E	■	T	O	E	■	■	O	A	T	E	R	S
M	O	R	E	A	N	D	M	O	R	E	■	■	■	■
A	V	A	I	L	■	■	I	R	A	■	S	A	A	B
G	E	N	R	E	■	I	N	T	■	H	E	L	L	O
E	D	G	E	■	H	I	S	■	■	Y	E	T	I	S
■	■	■	■	N	E	C	K	A	N	D	N	E	C	K
H	A	T	B	O	X	■	■	W	A	R	■	R	E	Y
A	G	A	I	N	A	N	D	A	G	A	I	N	■	■
W	R	I	T	■	G	E	A	R	■	T	R	A	D	E
K	E	N	T	■	O	V	I	D	■	E	A	T	E	R
S	E	T	S	■	N	E	S	S	■	S	N	E	E	R

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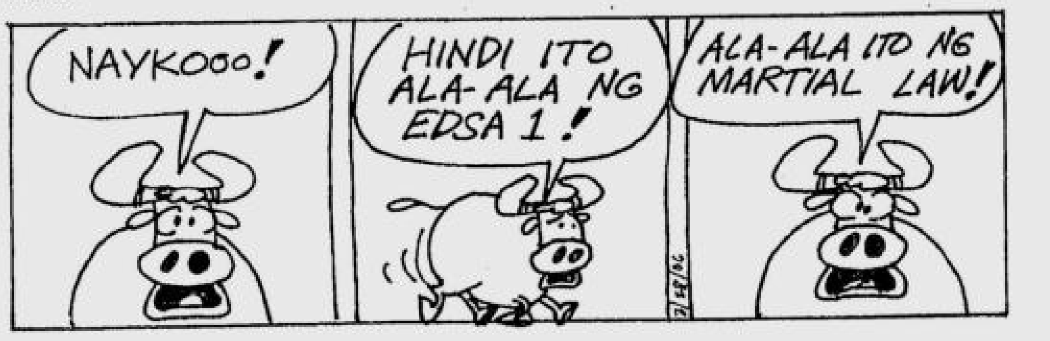
2/28/06

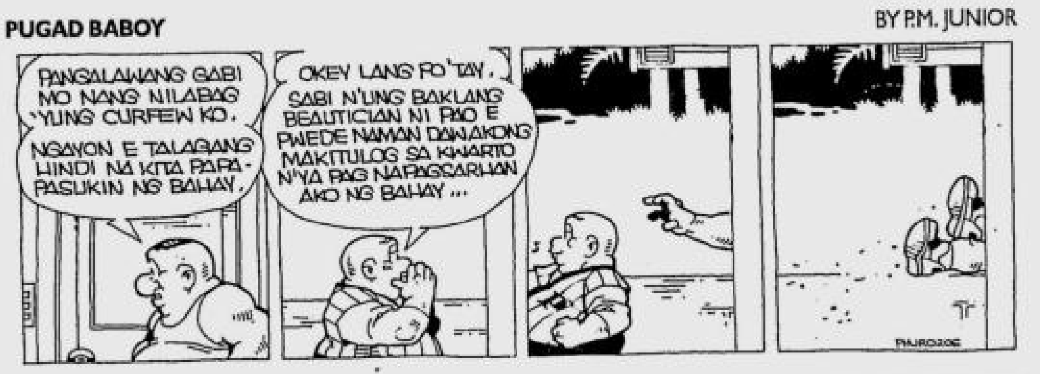
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


NAYKOOO!
HINDI ITO ALA-ALA NG EDSA 1!
ALA-ALA ITO NG MARTIAL LAW!

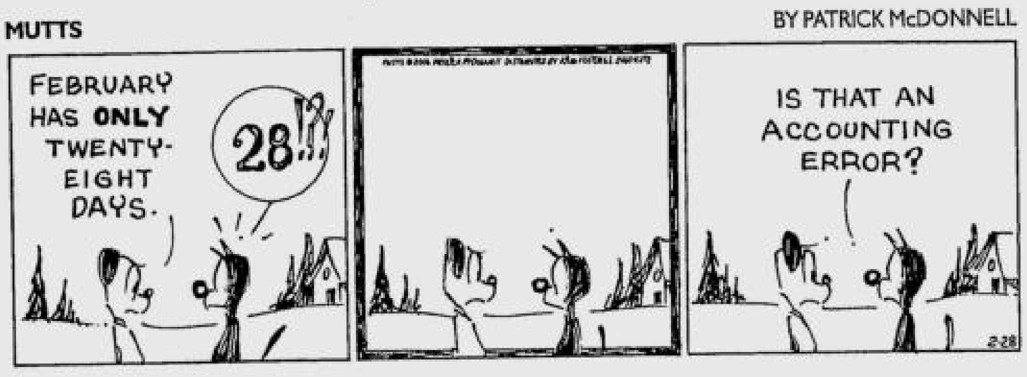
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


PANGALAWANG GABI MO NANG NILABAG 'YUNG CURFEW KO.
NGAYON E TALAGANG HINDI NA KITA PAPAPASUKIN NG BAHAY.
OKEY LANG PO 'TAY. SABI N'UNG BAKLANG BEAUTICIAN NI PAO E PWEDE NAMAN DAW AKONG MAKITULOG SA KWARTO N'YA PAG NAPAGSARHAN AKO NG BAHAY...

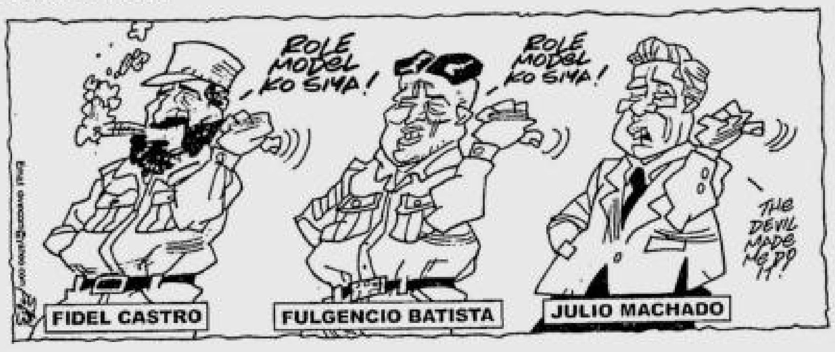
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


FEBRUARY HAS ONLY TWENTY-EIGHT DAYS.
28!?!
IS THAT AN ACCOUNTING ERROR?
2-28

DIVINE COMEDY

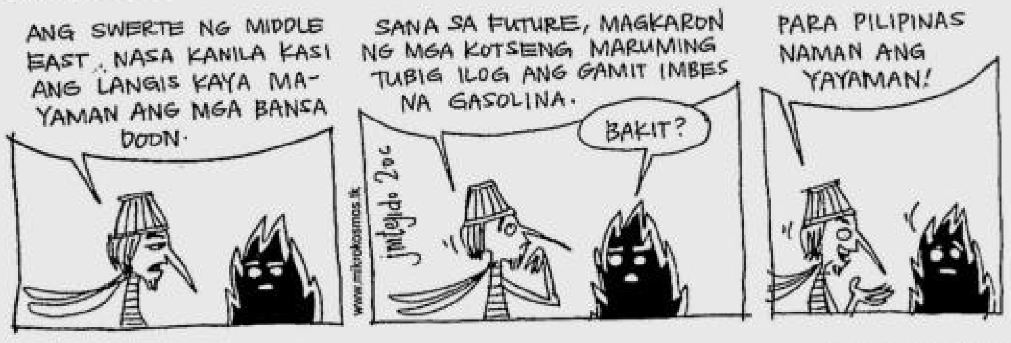
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


ROLE MODEL KO SIYA!
ROLE MODEL KO SIYA!
THE DEVIL MADE ME!?
FIDEL CASTRO
FULGENCIO BATISTA
JULIO MACHADO

A LESSON IN HISTORY: DICTATORS REPLACE DICTATORS

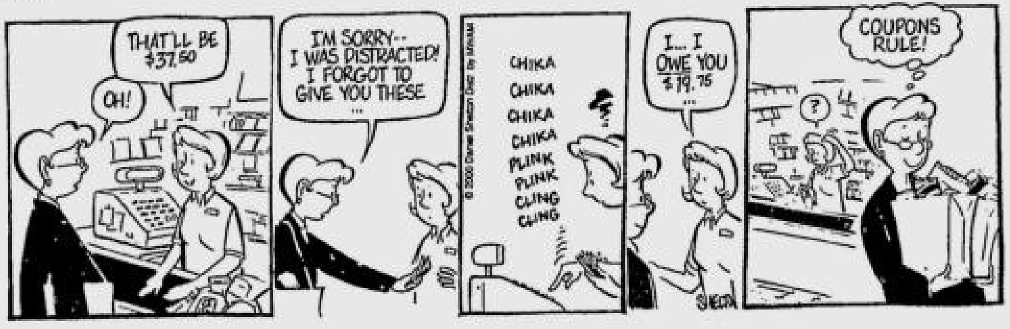
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG SWERTE NG MIDDLE EAST. NASA KANILA KASI ANG LANGIS KAYA MAYAMAN ANG MGA BANSA DOON.
SANA SA FUTURE, MAGKARON NG MGA KOTSENG MARUMING TUBIG ILOG ANG GAMIT IMBES NA GASOLINA.
BAKIT?
PARA PILIPINAS NAMAN ANG YAYAMAN!
www.mikrokosmos.tk

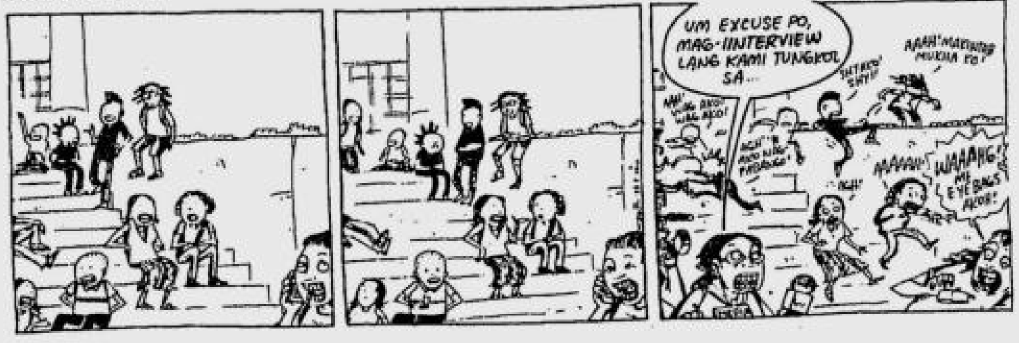
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


THAT'LL BE $37.50
OH!
I'M SORRY... I WAS DISTRACTED! I FORGOT TO GIVE YOU THESE...
CHIKA CHIKA CHIKA CHIKA PLINK PLINK CLING CLING
I... I OWE YOU $19.75...
COUPONS RULE!

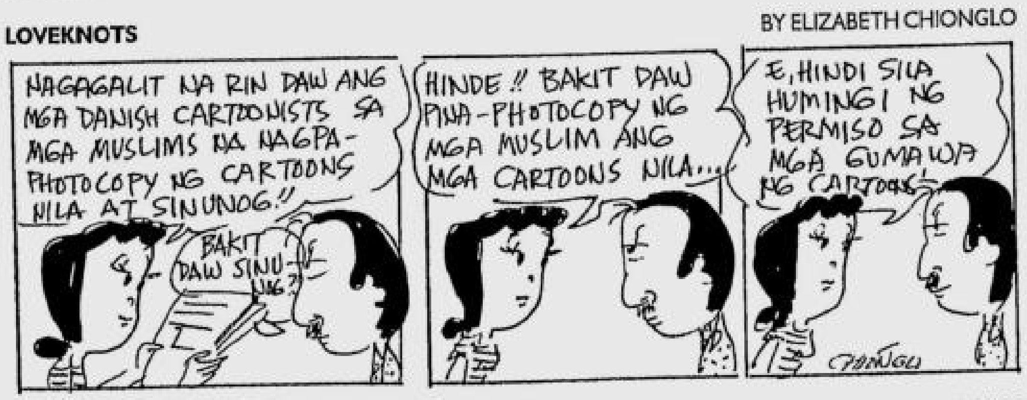
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


UM EXCUSE PO, MAG-IINTERVIEW LANG KAMI TUNGKOL SA...
AAAH! MAKINIS MUKHA KO!
WAAAH!
WAAAHG! MY EYEBAGS!

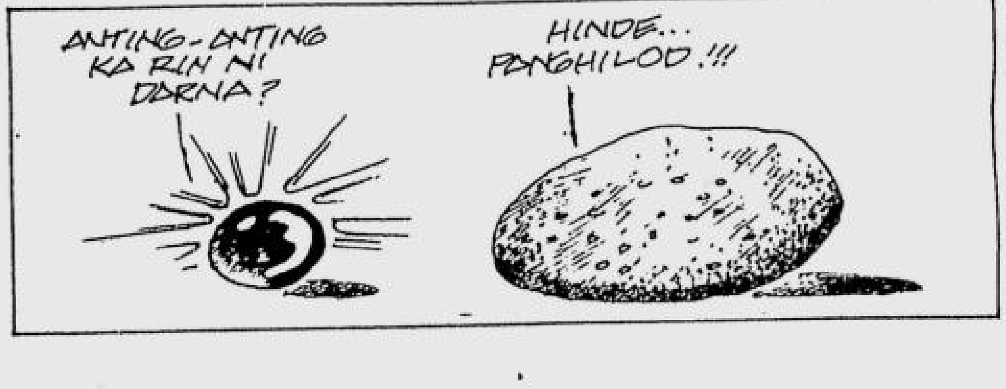
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NAGAGALIT NA RIN DAW ANG MGA DANISH CARTOONISTS SA MGA MUSLIMS NA NAGPA-PHOTOCOPY NG CARTOONS NILA AT SINUNOG!!
BAKIT DAW SINUNOG?
HINDE!! BAKIT DAW PINA-PHOTOCOPY NG MGA MUSLIM ANG MGA CARTOONS NILA...
E, HINDI SILA HUMINGI NG PERMISO SA MGA GUMAWA NG CARTOONS!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ANTING-ANTING KA RIN NI DARNA?
HINDE... PANGHILOD!!!

Editor Emmie G. Velarde
E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

ENTERTAINMENT

Text us your feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

EPY QUIZON says he'd gladly spend his own money for a project he believes in.

Thoroughly independent

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

IF THERE'S A DOLPHY movie that his son Epy Quizon would like to remake, it's "El Pinoy Matador."

Over a year ago, Epy bumped into Premiere producer Cirio H. Santiago in a Bohol airport and mentioned the possibility of updating the 1960s comedy.

"It was a challenging role and my dad had to fight a real bull in Madrid, Spain," Epy explained, adding that he is willing to study bullfighting as well.

"My production company has everything mapped out. We will shoot in Tijuana, Mexico instead because it is closer to California. Hopefully, this will push through soon."

Epy only recently went into

THOROUGHLY/ A2-2

Catching up with Ruffa Gutierrez

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

GUESS WHO THIS ACTOR IS! HE lamented to a lady reporter that the media has ruined his life. "I hate the media but I don't hate you," he said.

Then he started hitting on the dumbfounded reporter. Considering his track record with women, I wonder what his other "pick-up" lines are that have stopped girls dead in their tracks.

Clue: The actor is separated from his actress/TV host wife.

Glow of happiness

Happiness and peace are written all over **Ruffa Gutierrez-Bektas'** face. She's in town for a month-long vacation with her two adorable daughters **Lorin** and **Venice**. Her husband **Ylmaz**, whom she fondly calls "Poppy," will be arriving in two weeks. Marriage and motherhood have made **Ruffa** glow all the more. That's because her heart is in it and it shows. Here are tidbits from my tete a tete with the ever-stunning **Ruffa**.

I've never seen you happier. Why is that?

I'm content with my life and everyone who has hurt me in the past, I have forgiven. One more thing, I've made peace with (**Ilknaz**) the stepdaughter of **Ylmaz**. I even organized her birthday party 'cause she requested me to. *Nagkaiyakan pa nga kami nung nakipagbati siya sa akin*. Before that, we were at odds. When **Ylmaz** had an accident recently and she visited, I threw her out of the hospital room. But now I'm looking forward to building a relationship with her, as a best friend.

Do Ylmaz and you still have those intense fights?

Routine *na 'yun* (laughs) but… *lambingan lang namin 'yun*.We are very passionate people. I look forward to making up after each fight. He got mad when he found out what they made me do on "Extra Challenge." He told me, "I buy Fashion TV for you and you climb up coconut trees and chase frogs in a reality show!"

Do you plan to have a baby boy soon?

I don't wanna get preggy again for the next few years but that's what I said before I learned I was pregnant again! I only have two hands, enough for two kids. Feeling *ko nga minsan*, people don't look at me *na* 'cause I have so much baggage (laughs)!

What's new with you?

I just relaunched my website www.ruffagutierrez.com. It has original articles meant to inspire and educate and pictures that I took myself. Check out Fashiontv.com.tr. Also, I am planning to have a *tiangge*, sell my clothes and also my brothers' stuff to raise funds for the mudslide victims in Leyte. I'm hardly here in Manila so every time I come home I get depressed seeing how hard life is for most Pinoys. It's only right that I share my blessings. Even if I have such a charmed life, I'm not detached from reality. Shame on anyone who's like that.

CATCHING/ A2-2

RUFFA reveals that her husband Ylmaz wasn't amused by what she did on "Extra Challenge."

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4: Brokeback Mountain

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MTRCB ▶ PG-13
Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
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FROM THE DIRECTOR OF 'CHICAGO'
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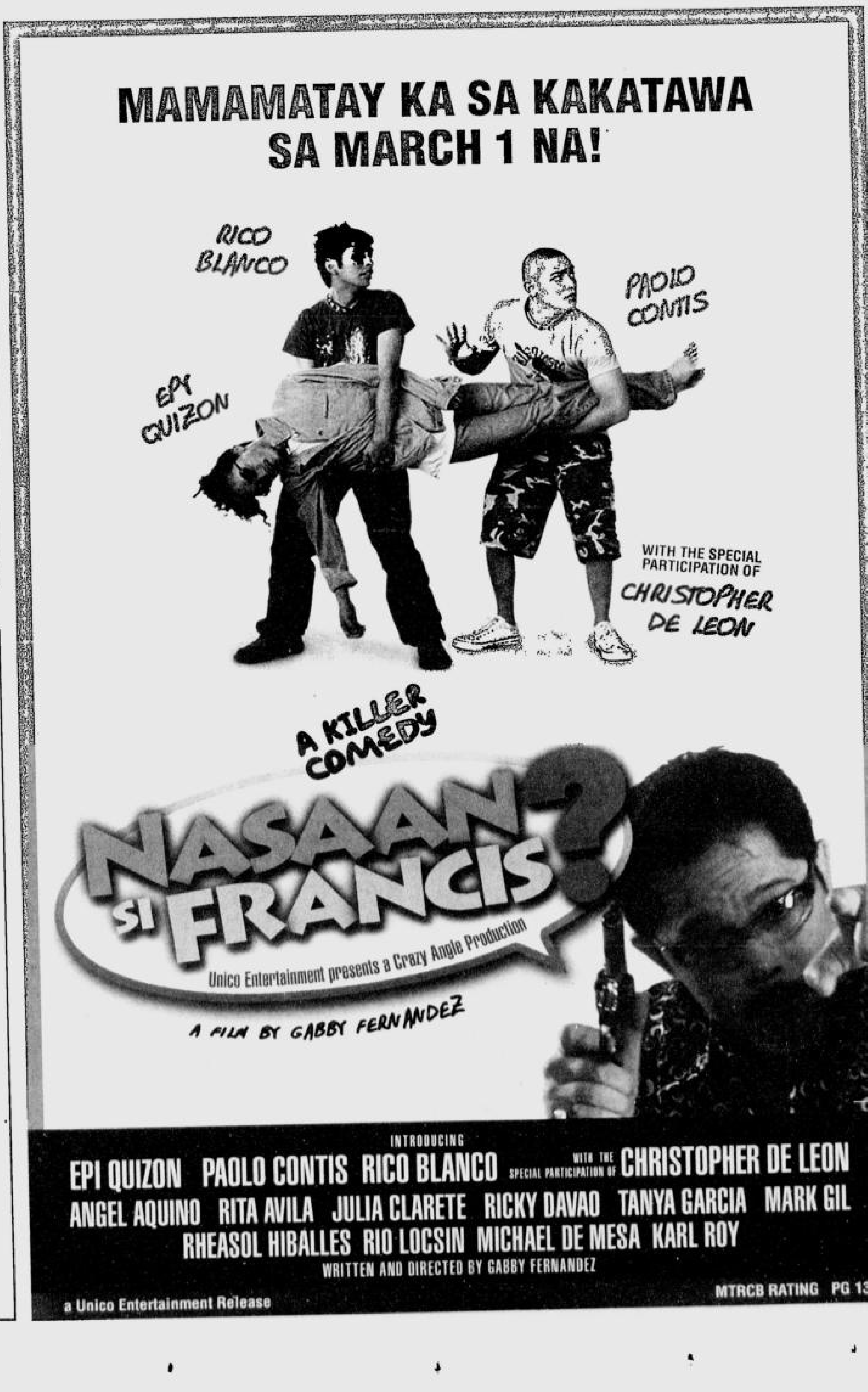
MTRCB ▶ G GENERAL PATRONAGE
ALL AGES ADMITTED
MARTIN LAWRENCE
This Ain't Your Average Baby's Momma
BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
NOW SHOWING


MAMAMATAY KA SA KAKATAWA SA MARCH 1 NA!
RICO BLANCO
PAOLO CONTIS
EPY QUIZON
WITH THE SPECIAL PARTICIPATION OF
CHRISTOPHER DE LEON
A KILLER COMEDY
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RHEASOL HIBALLES RIO LOCSIN MICHAEL DE MESA KARL ROY
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY GABBY FERNANDEZ
MTRCB RATING PG 13
a Unico Entertainment Release

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1 (DOLBY) MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA PG13
2 (DOLBY) BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2 GP
3 (DOLBY) SYRIANA R13
4 (DOLBY) FINAL DESTINATION R13
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) CLOSED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DDS) AEON FLUX
2 (SDDS) SYRIANA
3 (DTS) PINK PANTHER
4 GOLD (DTS) MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
5 GOLD (DOLBY) FINAL DESTINATION-3
6 GOLD (SDDS) BIG MOMMAS HOUSE-2
7 GOLD (DOLBY) BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN
8 FIREWALL
9 CLOSE TO YOU
10 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
2 (DOLBY) MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
3 (DOLBY) SYRIANA
4 (DOLBY) FINAL DESTINATION 3

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 PINK PANTHER - (GP)
2 MEMOIRS OF A GESIHA - (PG-13)
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2 - (GP)
4 CLOSE TO YOU - (GP)

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
2 (DOLBY) BIG MOMMAS HOUSE-2
3 (DOLBY) CLOSE TO YOU
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 (DTS) CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DOLBY) GOAL
4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN-2

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 (DOLBY) BLOODRAYNE
3 (DTS) CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN-2
4 CLOSE TO YOU

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 SAW-2
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD-2

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD-2
4 (DTS) FIREWALL

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 796.3320
1 RUMOR HAS IT / FIRE WALL
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DOLBY) I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 CLOSE TO YOU

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) FINAL DESTINATION-3
2 AEON FLUX
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 SYRIANA
5 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
5 CLOSE TO YOU

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1 CLOSE TO YOU
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 THE NEW WORLD
4 PLEASE CALL

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www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8604285, 6433994
1 BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

Masagana CINEMA 2000
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 MGA BATANG BANGKETA
2 FIREWALL
3 CLOSE TO YOU

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue
(Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 MEMOIRS OF A GESIHA
2 CLOSE TO YOU

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
2 UNDERWORLD
3 (DTS EX) CLOSE TO YOU
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 (DOLBY) RESERVED
4 (DTS) RESERVED

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD
4 (DTS) SAW-2

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 UNDERWORLD
2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN-2

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan, Telephone No. (044) 600-3025
1 UNDERWORLD-2
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
UNDERWORLD-2
CLOSE TO YOU
RESERVED
RESERVED

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 SAW-2
2 THE NEW WORLD

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) KIROT
2 PILYA
3 UNFINISHED LIFE
4 (DTS) SAW-2

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) SAW-2
2 NAGDADALAGA
3 (DTS) CLOSE TO YOU
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 THE MAN

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 UNDERWORLD-2
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 FIREWALL
4 GOAL

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 MGA BATANG BANGKETA
2 THE NEW WORLD

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FINAL DESTINATION 3 R13 1:35,3:45,5:55, 8:05,10:15	BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2 GP 1:35,3:45,5:55, 8:05,10:15	PINK PANTHER GP 12:50,3:05,5:20, 7:35,9:50
SYRIANA R13 11:40,2:20,5:00, 7:40,10:20	CLOSE TO YOU GP 12:20,2:40,5:00, 7:20,9:40	MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA PG13 11:10,2:00,4:50, 7:40,10:20

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MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00
GP

2 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
11:20, 2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:00
PG-13

3 SYRIANA
11:55, 2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:00
R-13

4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30
R-13

SHANG CINEPLEX
① MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
MTRCB PG-13
1.00, 4.00, 7.00, 10.00
② BIG MOMMA's HOUSE 2
MTRCB GP
12.40, 3.00, 5.20, 7.40, 10.00
③ SYRIANA
MTRCB . R-13
1.30, 4.20, 7.10, 10:00
④ FINAL DESTINATION 3
MTRCB R-13
2.15, 4.35, 6.55, 9.15
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CINEMA 1 FINAL DESTINATION 11:40, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:25, 10:35 R13
CINEMA 2 SYRIANA 11:00, 1:55, 4:45, 7:35, 10:25 R13
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
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...a dinetertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 PINK PANTHER 11:00, 1:15, 3:30, 5:45, 8:00, 10:20 GP
CINEMA 4 BIG MOMMAS HOUSE 2 10:40, 1:00, 3:20, 5:40, 8:00, 10:20 GP
CINEMA 5 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA 10:40, 1:35, 4:25, 7:15, 10:10 PG13
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MUSIC MUSEUM
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MARCH 4, 2006 VINA M., RACHEL A., GENEVA C. 9:00PM
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DOLLY Parton on "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno"

Focus on talk show

FOR DECADES NOW, JAY LENO AND **David Letterman** have hosted the most popular late-night TV talk shows in the United States. But they've been on the tube for so long that network bosses are now talking about their retirement.

In fact, Leno has already announced the name of his successor at NBC—**Conan O'Brien**, who hosts the late-late show after Leno's slot. Trouble is, Conan has also been on TV for so long, there's little freshness happening there.

In Letterman's case, he's not about to step down just yet—mainly because he's still having a whale of a time on his show!

Like a gawky, gangly adolescent who refuses to grow up, he continues to razz his contemporaries for their advanced age—just last week, he twitted veteran interviewer **Larry King** for being '97 years old."

But Letterman is no spring chicken himself, so his moment of truth could come in the next few years.

As for **Oprah Winfrey**, she's sort of intimated that she has about five years left on the tube—after which some people want her to run for US president!

Speaking more seriously now, younger talk-show hosts are starting to enliven the scene. Leading the pack is **Ellen DeGeneres.**

For one thing, DeGeneres is the first talk-show host to dance regularly on her show.

Other points of departure include the host's alternative sexuality, her goofy takes on serious stuff and gifts galore for the studio audience.

It's no coincidence that DeGeneres started her career as a stand-up comic. Older talk-show icons like **Johnny Carson**, Leno and Letterman share the same background, so it really was "safer" for TV boss-

VIEWFINDI

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es to tap Ellen as h

For her part, r aims to make it b mula, her passion her show comes fixated on eccentr

And Banks' po topics aren't thrilli work cut out for h

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Hoffman has from the Screen Golden Globes.

'Hey Body Roc

HEMP Republic's Rock" is part of Al lation album, "Si turing choice sele scene.

Hemp Republi **Liwanag, Al Se Mabs Tolentino Pasuquin Jr., G Ayende and Caio**

Thoroughly independent

From page A2-1

producing. With film editor Michael de Castro, Epy formed Crazy Angle and, with Unico and Unitel, bankrolled debuting filmmaker Gabby Fernandez's "Nasaan si Francis?"

In the movie, he plays the titular junkie, who spends the first half of the film "high as a kite," and the latter part, "dead as a dodo."

Movies, music

Epy has always been considered a staunch supporter of indie films. Last year alone, he appeared in at least five: Jon Red's "Boso," Peque Gallaga's "Pinoy Blonde," Sigfreid Barros Sanchez's "Laspong-gols" and "Ang Anak ni Brocka" and Doy del Mundo's "Pepot Artista."

"We shot 'Lasponggols' in Tarlac," Epy recalled. Since there was no cash for a hotel, Epy gamely slept with 40 other people in a room not bigger than a restaurant function room.

"I often end up advancing my own money," he said, laughing.

Still, he wants more!

He's in the cast of Ron Bryant's entry to Cinemalaya 2006: "Rotonda." And, he said, "Negotiations are ongoing to get Crazy Angle involved."

Epy is also raring to direct his own digital film, "Pangatlong Mundo."

"I am currently writing the script," he said. "It's about life in a Third World country. I hope my friends in the indie film community will support me in this undertaking."

On top of this, he is also part of the music group, "Makatha," led by saxophonist Alex Cruz of Anak Bayan, with drummer Marco Guzman, guitarists Jeff and Chuck de Castro, bassist Anthony Fernandez and deejay Carlo Packing. Fellow actor Gio Alvarez and nephew Boy2 Quizon sometimes join in.

"We do a lot of spoken word performances, with the poems of Noris Lopez," he said. "Our album, which took four years to complete, is under the Makatha label."

An indie venture, of course.

Not for money

"I don't care if we don't make money, as long as we get to make our own music," he said.

Epy, who has two ABS-CBN shows ("Quizon Avenue" and "Art Jam"), is comfortable straddling the mainstream and indie worlds.

"I'm in the middle," he quipped. "If I think that a project's intention is noble, I'd support it all the way!"

Catching up with . . .

From page A2-1

Updates

Here are updates on what some of your fave celebrities are into these days

Jean Garcia—runs a newly opened salon in New Manila ("Le Chic").

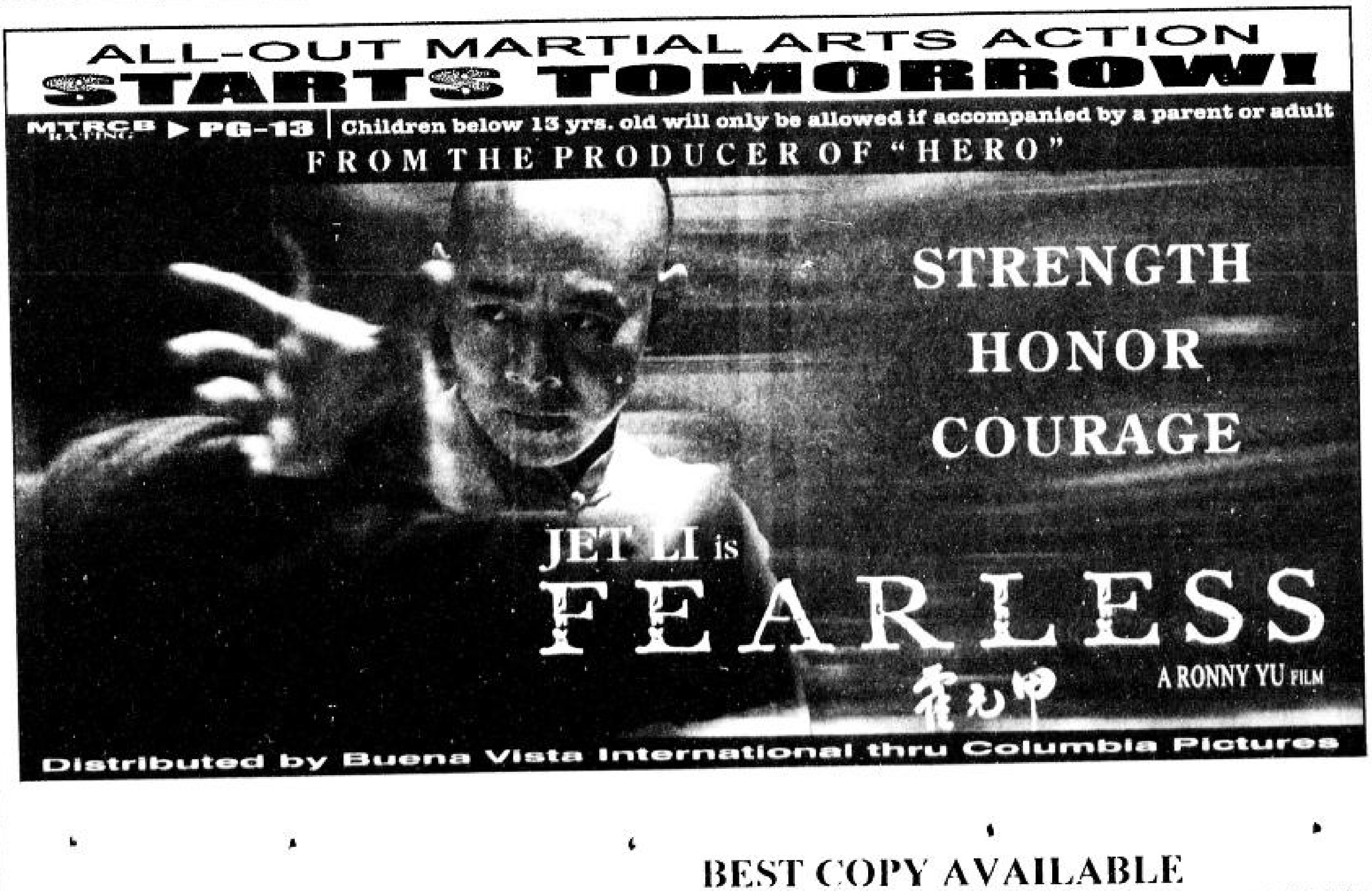
Cesar Montano—formed an acoustic band with himself as vocalist. His singing is as soulful as his acting!

Polo Ravales—he is the new endorser of a popular clothing line. Watch out for the billboards.

Cheryl Cosim—helps her boyfriend promote no-hangover tequila ("Tequila King").

Asia Agcaoili—has a toy business (kiddie toys, not... hehehe).

(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.)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hosts

ER

ıst.
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Actors Guild and the

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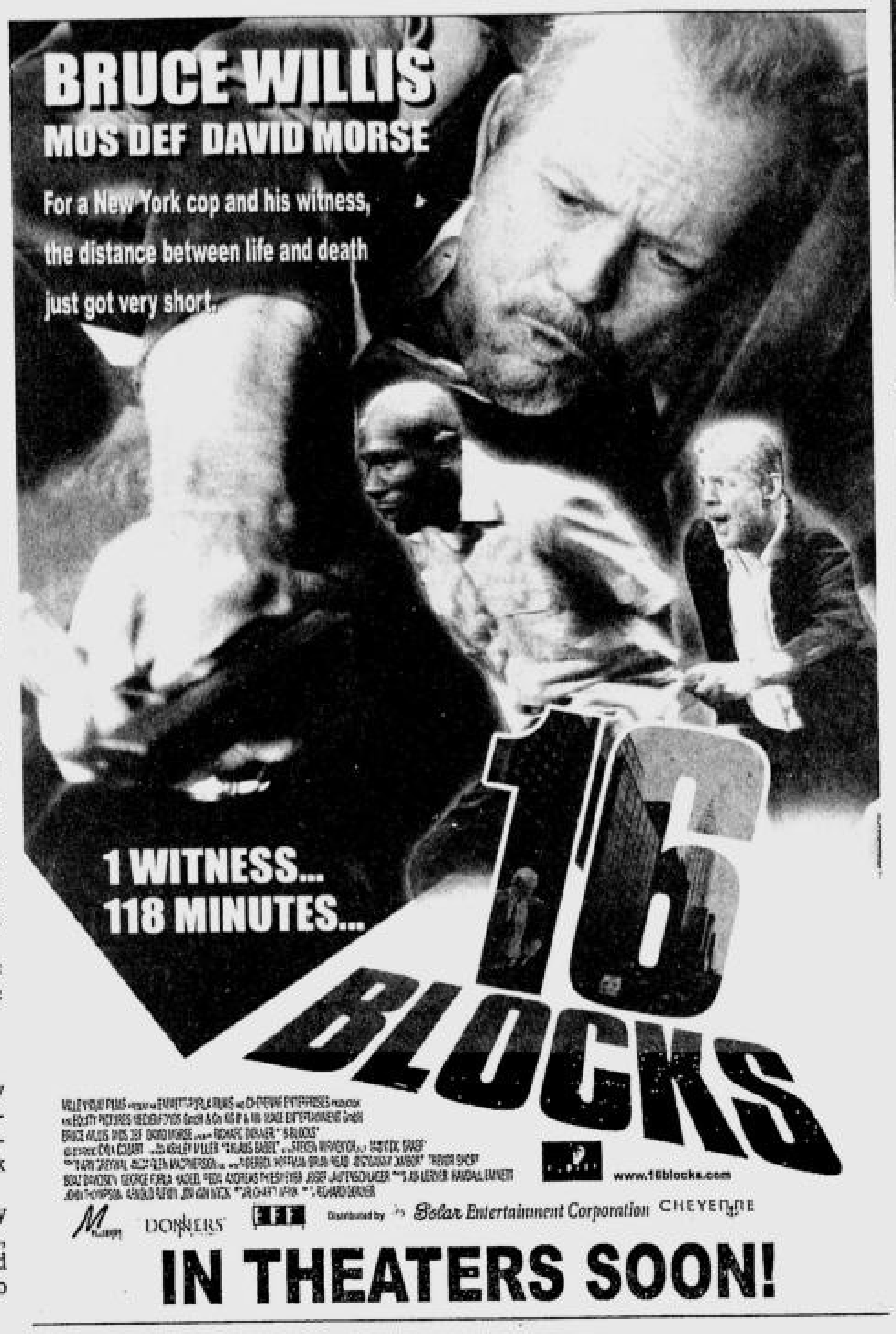
ions from the indie rock

bandmates are Bunny
e, Ton Ton Hatol Jr.,
r., Mags Gahol, Alfred
ober Calambro, Arjo
Cadiz.

DID YOU KNOW...

Brillante "Dante" Mendoza's "Masahista" has topped this year's honor roll of the academe-based Young Critics' Circle. It won Best Film, Screenplay, Cinematography and Visual Design, Editing, Sound and Aural Orchestration, plus Best Performance for lead star Coco Martin. Last year, the Pinoy digital film tied for the Best Video prize with Canadian Denis Côté's "Les Etats Nordiques" at the Locarno International Film Festival held in Switzerland.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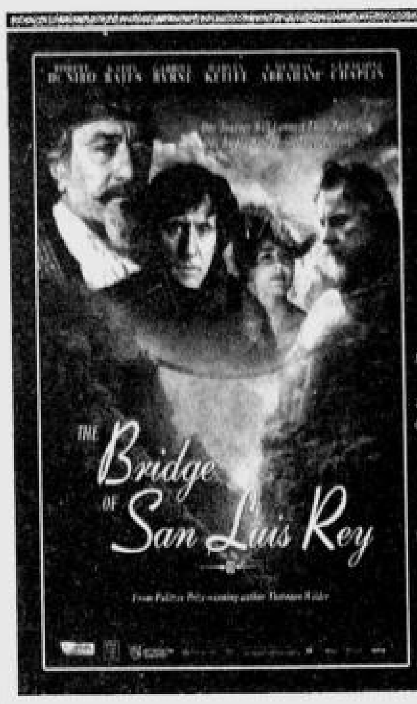
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FINAL DESTINATION 3 12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30	FIREWALL 1:30 / 4:20 / 7:10 / 9:50	PINK PANTHER 12:30 / 2:40 / 4:50	MEMORIES OF A GEISHA 12:30 / 3:20 / 6:10 / 9:00
SYRIANA 12:50 / 3:40 / 6:30 / 9:20	BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 12:45 / 3:00 / 7:00 / 9:50	AEON FLUX 1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50	ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P249/P299

ALIMALL CINEMAS

CLOSE TO YOU 12:00 R3 / 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40	BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2 12:00 / 2:10 / 4:20 / 6:30 / 8:40	MEMORIES OF A GEISHA 12:15 R3 / 2:15 / 5:05 / 7:55
I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 12:30 / 3:00 / 5:30 / 8:00	SYRIANA 12:05 / 2:55 / 5:45 / 8:35	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2	2 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN	3 THX MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 PINK PANTHER	5 SYRIANA	6 FINAL DESTINATION	7 CLOSE TO YOU
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 FINAL DESTINATION 3	2 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX SYRIANA 12:50, 3:30, 6:10, 8:50, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA 11:40, 2:35, 5:30, 8:25, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 AEON FLUX 1:25, 3:20, 5:15, 7:10, 9:05, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 1:10, 3:45, 6:20, 8:55, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2 12:50, 2:55, 5:00, 7:05, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC TOWN CENTER	1 THX MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA	2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2		
	3 SYRIANA	4 PINK PANTHER	5 FINAL DESTINATION 3	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA	2 RUMOR HAS IT	3 AEON FLUX	4 CLOSE TO YOU
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA	2 RUMOR HAS IT		
	3 AEON FLUX	4 CLOSE TO YOU	5 CLOSE TO YOU	

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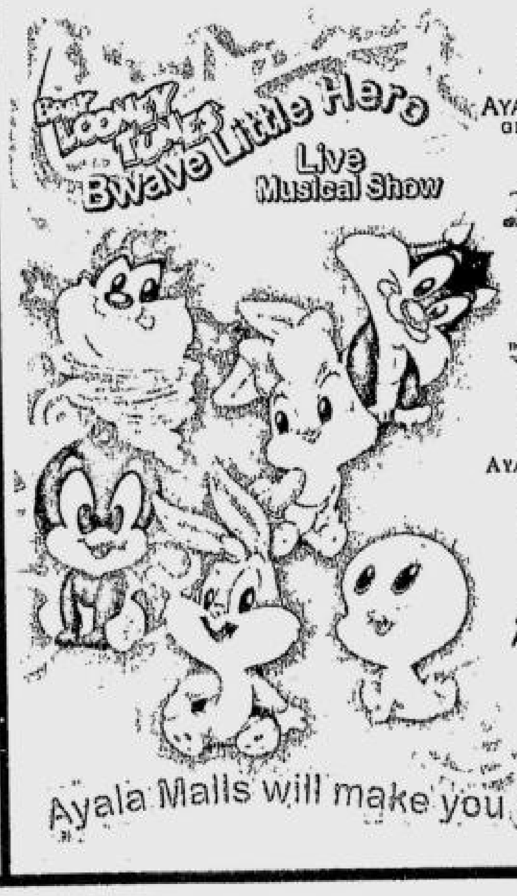

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2 FINAL DESTINATION 3
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

3 MURDER
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

5 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

6 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

7 THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY
12:20 2:40 5:00 7:20 9:40

8 CLOSE TO YOU
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

9 AEON FLUX
1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00

10 PINK PANTHER
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

2 MURDER
12:35 3:00 5:20 7:40 9:50

3 CLOSE TO YOU
11:30 1:35 3:40 5:45 7:50 10:00

4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

5 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

6 SYRIANA
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

7 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 FINAL DESTINATION 3
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

2 SYRIANA
1:10 3:40 6:10 9:00

3 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
11:55 2:55 5:55 9:00

4 AEON FLUX
11:50 1:40 3:30 5:20 7:10 9:00

5 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
12:45 3:30 6:15 9:00

6 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
11:45 2:05 4:25 6:45 9:05

7 CLOSE TO YOU
11:15 1:45 4:15 6:45 9:15

8 MGA BATANG BANGKETA
1:40 4:00 6:30 9:00

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 936-3229-30

1 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
4 MURDER
5 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN

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1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 CLOSE TO YOU
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2 SYRIANA
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
4 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA

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2 NEW WORLD
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 SAW 2
5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2

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1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 PINK PANTHER

IMUS

1 NEW WORLD
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
4 AEON FLUX
5 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA

STARMILLS

1 GOAL
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
5 BLOODRAYNE
6 NEW WORLD

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2 PINK PANTHER
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 FUN with DICK and JANE
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 SAW 2

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2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
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GUARANTEED SEATS

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08:00 LFS / 08:40 LMF / 11:05 END
BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
02:00 FS / 02:25 MF / 04:35 / 06:45
08:25 LFS / 09:00 LMF / 10:40 END
MEGAMALL
MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
12:30 FS / 01:00 MF / 03:55 / 06:50
09:25 LFS / 09:45 LMF / 12:10 END

CEBU (032) 231-3878
1 PROOF
11:00FS / 01:10 MF / 07:30
09:10 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:10 END
2 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
11:20FS / 11:30 MF / 02:00 / 04:30 / 07:00
09:22 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:50 END
3 AEON FLUX
11:20FS / 11:30 MF / 01:30 / 03:30 / 05:30
7:30 / 09:05 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:05 END

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL

1 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
4 RESERVED
5 FIREWALL
6 SYRIANA
7 AEON FLUX
8 PINK PANTHER
9 CLOSE TO YOU
10 FINAL DESTINATION 3
11 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
12 UNDERWORLD 2

SM CITY STA. MESA

1 FINAL DESTINATION 3
2 SYRIANA
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
4 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
5 CLOSE TO YOU
6 PINK PANTHER
7 AEON FLUX
8 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
9 FIREWALL
10 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY BICUTAN

1 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
2 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA

1 PINK PANTHER
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA

SM CITY FAIRVIEW

1 SAW 2
2 PINK PANTHER
3 FIREWALL
4 AEON FLUX
5 CLOSE TO YOU
6 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
7 FINAL DESTINATION 3
8 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
9 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
10 SYRIANA
11 UNDERWORLD 2
12 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY SOUTHMALL

1 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 AEON FLUX
6 SYRIANA
7 FIREWALL
8 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
9 PINK PANTHER
10 RESERVED

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1 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
2 FINAL DESTINATION 3
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA

SM CITY NORTH EDSA

1 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 AEON FLUX
4 RESERVED
5 PINK PANTHER
6 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
7 SYRIANA
8 FINAL DESTINATION 3

SM CITY MANILA

1 FINAL DESTINATION 3
2 FIREWALL
3 SAW 2
4 PINK PANTHER
5 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
6 AEON FLUX
7 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
8 NEW WORLD
9 CLOSE TO YOU
10 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
11 FIREWALL
12 SYRIANA

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1 FINAL DESTINATION 3
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
3 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
4 SYRIANA
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
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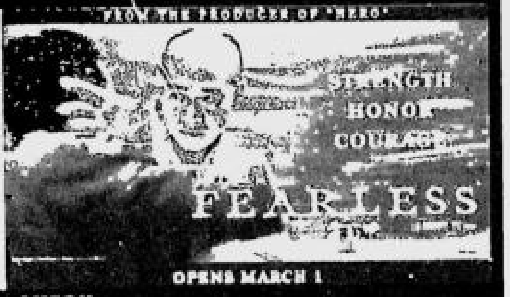

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SM CITY PAMPANGA

1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
3 BLOODRAYNE
4 PINK PANTHER
5 NEW WORLD
6 CLOSE TO YOU

SM CITY BAGUIO

1 BLOODRAYNE
2 THE MAID
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO

1 AEON FLUX
2 PINK PANTHER
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 CLOSE TO YOU

SM CITY BACOOR

1 FIREWALL
2 PINK PANTHER
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
5 AEON FLUX
6 CLOSE TO YOU
7 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
8 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA

SM CITY STA. ROSA

1 GOAL
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 BLOODRAYNE

SM CITY MARILAO

1 FIREWALL
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 NEW WORLD

SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 NEW WORLD
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
4 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA

SM CITY LUCENA

1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 WHO'S YOUR DADY
4 WALK THE LINE

SM CITY BATANGAS

1 FIREWALL
2 NEW WORLD
3 GOAL
4 CLOSE TO YOU

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU

1 PROOF
2 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
3 AEON FLUX
4 PINK PANTHER
5 FIREWALL
6 BLOODRAYNE
7 CLOSE TO YOU
8 RUMOR HAS IT

SM CITY ILOILO

1 BLOODRAYNE
2 RESERVED
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 MUNICH
5 CLOSE TO YOU
6 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
7 RESERVED
8 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA

SM CITY DAVAO

1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
2 BLOODRAYNE
3 PINK PANTHER
4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 MUNICH
6 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
4 SAW 2

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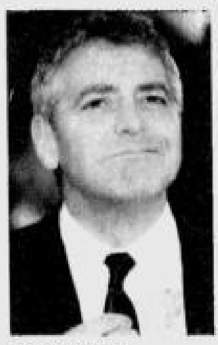

CLOONEY

Unpatriotic

LONDON—US actor and director George Clooney said he was proud to be denounced as unpatriotic for questioning US policy because he wanted to be on "the right side of history."

Interviewed on BBC television's Newsnight about his latest films "Syriana" and "Good Night, and Good Luck," Clooney said that not only did he accept the right to be attacked for his views but he even relished them.

Clooney has received critical acclaim for "Syriana"—about oil politics and Islamic extremism—and, for "Good Night, and Good Luck," a reminder of the threat to civil liberties through a story about the anti-communist hysteria in the United States of the 1950s. *AFP*

BONO

Bono in Rio

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil— Thousands of Brazilians took a break from samba to rock with U2 singer Bono during Carnival celebrations in a northeastern city, local media reported Friday.

Bono performed an impromptu duet of "Vertigo" with Brazilian popular singer Ivete Sangalo during Carnival celebrations in Salvador, some 1,200 kilometers (750 miles) northeast of Rio de Janeiro, the O Globo newspaper reported. *AP*

CRAIG

Boycott

NEW YORK—They're shaken, stirred and just plain angry. And several months late with their response.

A group of James Bond fans have launched a website, www.craignotbond.com, to protest British actor Daniel Craig replacing Pierce Brosnan in the 007 film franchise, and threaten a boycott of the upcoming Bond movie "Casino Royale."

Craig, whose recent screen credits include "Munich," was tapped last October to play the secret-agent icon.

A statement on the site said fans were insulted with EON cast "a short, blond, odd-looking Daniel Craig in the role of Bond." *AP*

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PETRON

PLDT, Piltel surprise mart with record profits

But MVP warns of lean earnings for 2006

By Daxim L. Lucas

TELECOMMUNICATIONS giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) surprised investors and financial markets yesterday, reporting record earnings that surpassed even the most bullish of forecasts.

PLDT's mobile phone subsidiary Pilipino Telephone Corp. reported a net income of P13.5 billion compared with a profit of P9.8 billion in 2004.

However, PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan cautioned that the company's performance in 2006 would likely be "benign" and would pale in comparison to its performance of the past three years.

PLDT earned P34.1 billion in 2005, reflecting a 22-percent increase from the P28 billion it made the year before. Most analysts were expecting PLDT to make P32 billion, at most.

The company's 2005 net income was the highest ever reported, in absolute terms, for a Philippine-based corporation.

Despite this, financial markets were not cheering and investors remained wary of PLDT's future earnings potential—a point Pangilinan was quick to address.

"We are at an inflection point," he said during a media briefing in Makati City yesterday afternoon, stressing that PLDT would have to pause form its frenetic growth rate to focus on building future sources of revenue.

"After seven years of significant expansion, our businesses are reaching a 'tipping point,'" he said. "We are embracing new technologies that provide exciting opportunities."

Several of PLDT's critics—including influential investment bank Morgan Stanley—have pointed to the slowing growth and rising level of competition in the wireless business as the main threat to the company's earnings potential in the coming years.

Stung by the market's doubts about its future, PLDT officials yesterday rolled out a detailed presentation pointing to the sources of revenue growth in the coming years.

Pangilinan outlined the company's three-pronged strategy which involves maximizing its penetration in the existing market for second-generation mobile phone services, introducing the much awaited third-generation mobile service in the country, and optimizing its fixed-line telephone business.

He added that 2006 would be "the year to lay the foundations for earnings growth in 2007 onwards."

"We will be back on track in earnings momentum by 2007."

PLDT president Napoleon L. Nazareno

PLDT/B3

ABS-CBN prexy quits, joins NutriAsia

ALEJANDRO

ABS-CBN PRESIDENT and chief operating officer Luis F. Alejandro has resigned to rejoin starting March 16 packaged food industry leader NutriAsia, his former employer, which recently acquired controlling interest in Del Monte Pacific Ltd. together with San Miguel Corp.

This was jointly announced by Eugenio Lopez III, chair and CEO of ABS-CBN, and Joselito D. Campos Jr., chair and CEO of NutriAsia. Lopez will assume the presidency of ABS-CBN.

Alejandro joined ABS-CBN in 2004 on a two-year contract with the main mandate of effecting organizational restructuring and systems changes in the network, to improve its competitiveness and marketing orientation in the changing business environment of mass media.

At ABS-CBN, Alejandro presided over the restructuring of the network, trimming staff and redesigning the network's organization as well as instituting management practices, all of which will help make the network more responsive to a highly competitive environment, in order to further expand its leadership position in the industry.

Gov't rejects all T-bill bids

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT REJECTED ALL BIDS for treasury bills yesterday as banks sought unreasonably high interest rates after the market was spooked by the political tension during the weekend.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the government could not be forced to allow absurd increases in interest rates given its strong cash position, adding it could afford to wait until the market jitters dissipated.

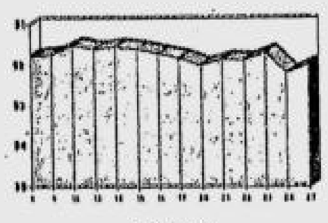
"The market will get a sense that this (political uncertainty) is just temporary. Next auction will show more stability in the rates," Cruz said in a briefing after the auction yesterday.

Had the Bureau of the Treasury accepted the bids for the short-term government securities, the 91-day bills could have fetched as much as 5.431 percent, or 18.1 basis points higher than the rate set during last week's auction. The 182-day bill yield could have risen by 6.7 basis points to 6.181 percent, and the 364-day paper could have settled at 7.323 percent, or 13.7 basis points higher than the previous week's rate.

Cruz said the Treasury could have accepted the increase in the rates had it been reflective of secondary market trends. He said, however, that there was hardly any trading in the secondary market, and that the increase in interest rates pushed by the market therefore had no basis.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P51.96= $

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 27, 2006

¥116.19= $1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 27, 2006

GOLD: $556.50-557.00

per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 27, 2006

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BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

Israel-based group seen investing $300M in RP

Focus on infra, real estate, energy and water

By Abigail L. Ho

AFRICA ISRAEL INVESTMENTS LTD, an Israel-based conglomerate, will invest between $250 million and $300 million in the Philippines, particularly in real estate, infrastructure, energy and water sectors.

Africa Israel Asia-Pacific vice president for development Jacob Ben-Moshe said the amount would only be the company's initial investment here and that it was keen on infusing more cash into various industries in the country later.

"If we find room for potential investments beyond that amount, more will be invested here," he told reporters. "We believe in the potentials of this country. Despite the state of emergency, we didn't think twice about coming here."

He said the conglomerate, which was 80-percent-owned by diamond magnate Lev Leviev and 20-percent-owned by the public via the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, was very "comfortable" in the Philippines.

"We think this is still one of the safest countries in the world," he said.

Africa Israel has operations in the United States, Russia, the Czech Republic, Canada, Holland, Serbia, Romania, and Namibia.

Its Philippine investment is its first in the Asia-Pacific region.

The conglomerate has forged a partnership with Filinvest Development Corp. through the acquisition of 40 percent of Cyberzone Properties Inc., a Filinvest subsidiary involved in information technology park development.

Ben-Moshe said Africa Israel also had other projects with Filinvest, including the construction of residential buildings in Alabang.

The conglomerate also has a venture with the Century Properties Group of Jose Antonio, which involved residential developments in Metro Manila, he said.

He said the group was also looking at teaming up with Metro Pacific Corp. for a $200-million white oil pipeline project for Philippine National Oil Co.

The pipeline will run from Bataan to Pulilan in Bulacan, and will transport white oil, which is used by the textile, chemical and plastics manufacturing industries.

Ben-Moshe said the group was also interested in water projects and some of National Power Corp.'s power generation assets.

Jollibee expanding in US, China

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

JOLLIBEE FOODS CORP, THE COUNTRY'S largest fast food chain, is opening at least two more stores in the United States this year as it firmly believes it can reverse the weaknesses in its operations in that country.

Also, Jollibee is considering opening an outlet in China, where it has already gained a foothold through its recently acquired Chinese fast food brand, Yonghe King.

Tommy Y. King, vice-president for Jollibee's US operations, told reporters in a meeting yesterday that Jollibee would open a new store on Beverly Boulevard in Los Angeles, California and another at Panorama City in Southern California.

The Los Angeles store will occupy part of a 1,600-square meter property and will be launched in early March. The 300-square meter store in Panorama City will start construction in March or April and will open in June or July.

King said Jollibee spent between $350,000 and $660,000 to put up a new store.

Sales in its US stores grew 14.6 percent as of Feb. 24, and 10 percent in January. Specific figures were not provided but King said that one store could post sales of about $3,000 a day.

King also said Jollibee was studying a plan to put up an outlet in Las Vegas and relocate its closed store in Vallejo, California to another site within the city. Jollibee closed the Vallejo store last January.

Today, Jollibee runs 9 outlets in the US , mostly in Northern and Southern California.

To help turn around its US operations, Jollibee will send some of its best managers to the US.

In the meantime, Jollibee chief finance officer Ysmael V. Baysa said Jollibee had other plans for China on top of the Yonghe King operations.

"There are other brands under consideration for China. We are conducting studies," Baysa told INQUIRER. He did not, however, give a firm answer when asked whether Jollibee will put up a new store in China this year.

From January to September last year, Jollibee reported a 6-percent growth in net income to P1.18 billion.

The Jollibee Group, the largest fast food chain in the country, operates a total of 1,429 stores in the country and in nine countries worldwide.

ROUND-UP

Filinvest earmarks P1B for IT park expansion

LISTED FIRM FILINVEST Development Corp. has allotted nearly P1 billion this year for further development of its Northgate Cyberzone information technology park in Alabang.

In an interview during the groundbreaking and topping off ceremonies for two of the IT park's newest buildings yesterday, FDC president Josephine Gotianun-Yap said the contact center and business process outsourcing (BPO) sectors continued to boost demand for quality office space.

This was why, even while still awaiting the completion of the two new buildings, Plaza A and Plaza D, she said the developer was already planning on adding yet another building before the end of the year "if market demand so warrants."

The six-storey Plaza A and Plaza D buildings will boost Filinvest's aggregate leasing portfolio at the IT park to 60,000 square meters from the current 40,000 square meters.

Plaza A, which already has "a contact center of a distinguished service company" leasing three of its six floors, would likely be 100-percent leased by next month, Gotianun-Yap said. ***Abigail L. Ho***

UOB gets 2.3% stake, board seat in Banco de Oro

UNITED OVERSEAS BANK of Singapore has obtained a 2.3 percent stake and one board seat in Banco de Oro Universal Bank to pilot-test a potential strategic partnership with retail tycoon Henry Sy's bank.

BDO issued, through private placement, about 22.43 million common shares to UOB Philippines for P22.75 per share, BDO told the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday.

The shares were given in exchange for UOB's 66 branches in the Philippines and their deposit liabilities that BDO had taken over in line with a May 6, 2005 agreement.

Although one board seat in BDO would normally require shares equivalent to 8 percent of the bank, BDO president Nestor Tan said the Singaporean bank would now be given board access to test a potential strategic fit.

He said UOB, which had phased out its domestic branches, was looking for a strategic partner in the Philippines.

"This is the first step for UOB to gauge whether BDO will be that Philippine partner," Tan said.

"We're giving them a seat and it's up to them to gauge whether they'll increase their stake later on," he stressed.

BDO took over all but one of UOB's branches and about P11 billion worth of deposit liabilities but did not assume any of its non-performing assets.

Should UOB decide to expand its presence in BDO, the latter expects the partnership to provide synergies, particularly in the areas of trade finance, credit cards and private banking. ***Doris C. Dumlao***

SMC unit posts revenue hike

SAN MIGUEL BREWERY Hong Kong Ltd. yesterday said its 2005 consolidated gross revenue hit HK$1.27 billion, or slightly up from HK$1.26 billion in 2004.

In Hong Kong, gross revenue grew 1.0 percent to HK$704 million; in mainland China, the amount remained stable at HK$564 million.

Hong Kong operations recorded a 63.5-percent increase in operating income to HK$15.2 million. Flagship brand San Miguel retained its standing as the leading brand in Hong Kong. Various strategic programs have been employed to reinforce the San Miguel brand value and to strengthen the brand's ties with customers and consumers.

The company is the largest player in the Hong Kong beer market with total market share of about 29 percent.

Commenting on the company's China strategy, the SMC chair Ramon S. Ang said, "our priority in our China operations is to gain momentum and improve competitiveness and build on buoyant demand for our highly popular local brand."

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 27, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	32.5	34	32.5	33.5	505,700
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58.5	59	58	58.5	5,499,600
China Banking Corp.	650	660	650	660	1,360
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	600
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.5	0.53	0.5	0.53	5,280,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	62	63.5	62	63.5	72,000
International Exch. Bank	23.5	23.75	23.5	23.75	50,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	33.5	34	33	34	567,100
Philippine National Bank	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	10,600
Phil. Savings Bank	35	35	35	35	4,000
Security Bank Corp.	38	38	37.5	38	421,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	33	33	33	33	1,000
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Manulife Financial Corp.	3230	3260	3230	3260	1,050
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1	1	1	13,000
Sun Life Financial Inc	2200	2200	2200	2200	510
Ivantage Corp.	0.75	0.77	0.75	0.77	240,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	44.5	45	44.5	44.5	1,036,900
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	40.5	40.5	39	40	1,078,500
Manila Electric Co. A	12.5	12.75	12.5	12.5	48,200
Manila Electric Co. B	18	18.5	18	18.5	359,500
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.2	6.3	6.2	6.3	471,000
Petron Corp.	4.4	4.55	4.4	4.55	3,140,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
CADP Group Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	19.5	19.5	19.25	19.25	61,200
Jollibee Foods Corp.	33.5	35.5	33.5	35	286,700
RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	40,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.66	1.6	1.64	432,000
San Miguel Corp. A	60	61.5	60	61.5	304,200
San Miguel Corp. B	80	81.5	80	81.5	155,900
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3	3	3	3	1,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.75	18	17.5	18	5,934,900
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	700,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	1,510,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.24	1.28	1.22	1.28	2,807,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.15	4.2	4.15	4.2	253,000
CHEMICALS					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	1,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	1,000,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	200,000
Panasonic Mfg Phil Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	5,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	400,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.008	0.007	0.0075	40,000,000
Ayala Corp.	317.5	320	317.5	320	366,460
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.8	4.85	4.8	4.85	281,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	1,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.28	2.3	2.28	2.3	61,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.88	0.89	0.88	0.89	2,470,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	1,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.93	0.94	0.92	0.94	8,350,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.8	3	2.8	3	415,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.68	1.7	1.68	1.7	143,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	4.6	4.75	4.6	4.75	764,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	1,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.215	0.23	0.215	0.23	20,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.125	0.135	0.125	0.13	1,130,000
SM Investments Corp.	216	221	215	221	345,320
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	500,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	10.75	11	10.5	11	3,502,800
Belle Corp.	0.93	0.96	0.93	0.96	2,000,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.22	0.23	0.22	0.23	3,050,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.56	1.62	1.56	1.62	402,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	25,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.225	0.24	0.225	0.24	290,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.42	0.43	0.42	0.43	2,120,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.14	1.2	1.14	1.2	4,293,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	10,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.205	0.205	0.2	0.2	730,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	190,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.34	1.38	1.34	1.34	7,502,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.32	0.33	0.31	0.32	6,540,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.24	0.26	0.24	0.25	1,840,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	6.3	6.5	6.3	6.5	21,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	500,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.8	7.9	7.8	7.8	1,282,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.13	0.125	0.13	1,000,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	20,700
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	29,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.87	0.88	0.87	0.88	340,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	830	845	825	845	16,230
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.05	3.2	3.05	3.2	3,031,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1750	1780	1750	1780	70,080
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.0525	0.049	0.0525	700,000
Philweb Corp.	0.025	0.026	0.024	0.026	108,100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.96	1.96	1.96	1.96	100,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	50,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11	11.25	11	11.25	100,100
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	200,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.66	1.72	1.66	1.72	1,559,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	100,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.36	0.41	0.36	0.4	4,050,000
EDUCATION					
IPeople Inc.	3.05	3.1	3.05	3.1	357,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Paxys Inc.	7.3	7.4	7.3	7.3	654,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	50,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	30,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	32,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.2	6.6	6.2	6.6	4,900,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.2	0.21	0.2	0.21	1,210,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co.B	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	1,730,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	14,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.024	32,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.005	0.0055	0.005	0.0055	26,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.64	1.66	1.64	1.64	4,031,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.7	1.76	1.7	1.74	9,571,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	26	26.5	26	26.5	165,100
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	200,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.235	0.25	0.235	0.245	3,690,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	64,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	1,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.44	0.45	0.44	0.45	300,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series N	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	11.25	11.25	11	11.25	124,000

CURRENCIES

February 27, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.841893	1.000000	52.0090
Japan	Yen	0.007207	0.008560	0.4452
United Kingdom	Pound	1.469018	1.744900	90.7505
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.108518	0.128898	6.7039
Canada	Dollar	0.733101	0.870777	45.2882
Singapore	Dollar	0.518854	0.616295	32.0529
Australia	Dollar	0.622655	0.739590	38.4653
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.233730	2.653224	137.9915
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.224481	0.266638	13.8676
Brunei	Dollar	0.517260	0.614402	31.9544
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000091	0.000108	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.021395	0.025413	1.3217
UAE	Dirham	0.229217	0.272264	14.1602
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.187800	61.7763
Argentina	Peso	0.274009	0.325468	16.9273
Brazil	Real	0.395069	0.469263	24.4059
India	Rupee	0.018983	0.022548	1.1727
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.226680	0.269251	14.0035
Mexico	New Peso	0.080371	0.095465	4.9650
South Africa	Rand	0.138015	0.163934	8.5260
Korea	Won	0.000871	0.001035	0.0538
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025956	0.030830	1.6034

PLDT, Piltel …

From page B1

stressed the role of new technologies like broadband Internet in securing the company's future revenue stream.

Piltel, the Philippines' third biggest cellular operator with approximately 5 million subscribers on Talk 'N Text, the company's prepaid GSM service, recorded net additions of about 372,000 in 2005 despite heightened competition.

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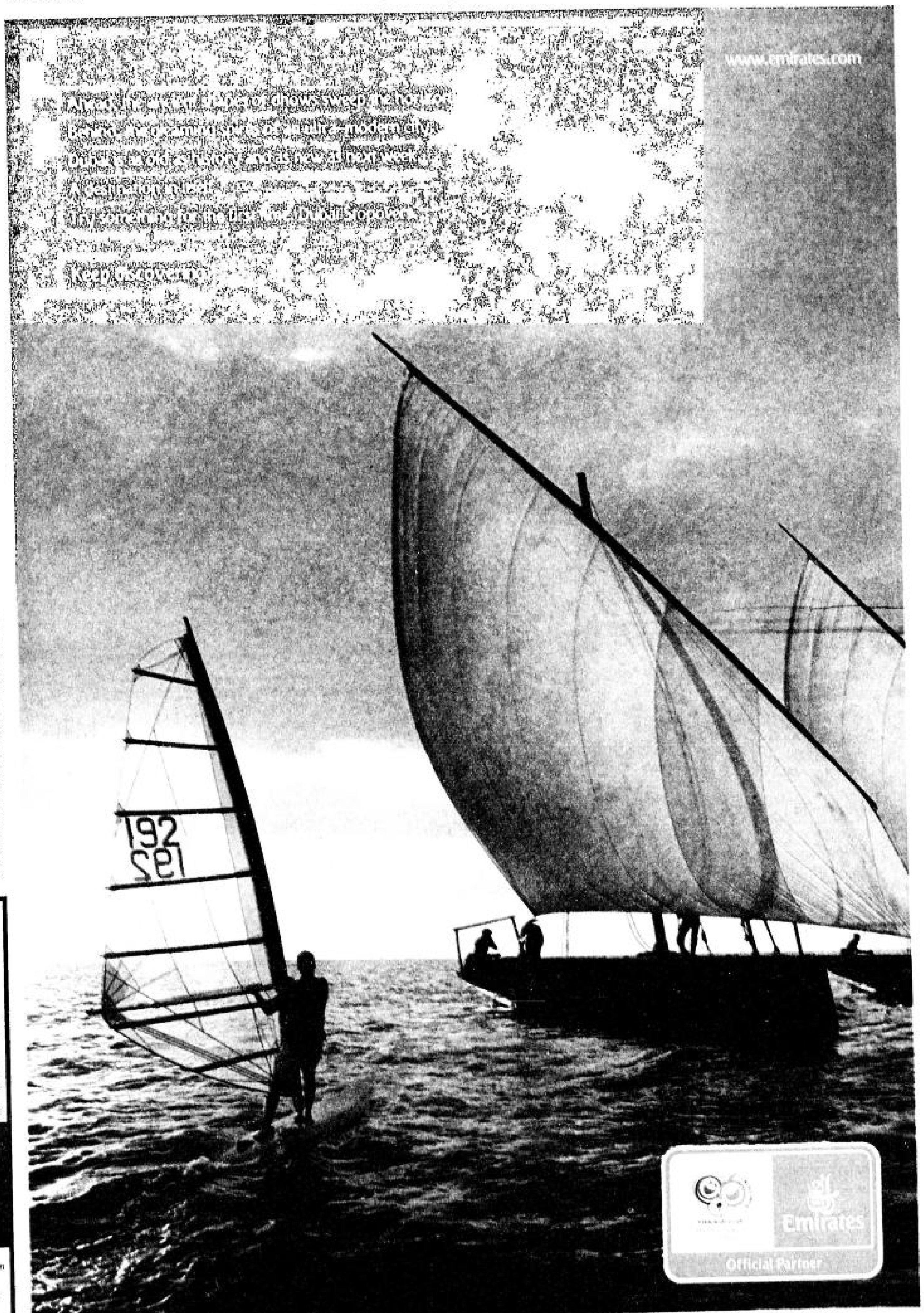

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"Even when I walk through a dark valley, I feel no harm. For you are at my side, your rod and staff give me courage..."
Psalm 23:4

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

Rodolfo Arcega Tirona, Jr.

wish to convey our deepest appreciation to all of you, our relatives and friends, who spent precious time with us, sent flowers, mass cards, or in some other way expressed your love, concern and support in celebrating Boy's coming home to his Creator.

I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race, I have kept the faith
(2 Timothy 4)

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."
Psalm 23:6

Servillano H. Toreja

"Banoy"

of Ibaan, Batangas

Peacefully joined our Lord on February 23, 2006 at the age of 72.

His loving wife
Crisanta

Children & Grandchildren

Precy and Nono Peña
Michelle, Hanz & Hachelle
Rosie and Tony Villaruel
LA, Anton, Joseph & Donnie
Vickky and Noli Reyes
Matthew & Mark
Danny & Pat Toreja
Joana, Paulo, Philippe & Janine
Diony and Akiss Toreja
Amiel, Fatima & Jeni
Arnel and Eileen Toreja
Alec & Miguel
Didith and Leo Carandang
Christopher
Noel and Angel Toreja
Niño
Criscell and Noel Ubamos
David

Brothers, sisters, relatives & friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at his residence, #263 Santiago St., Poblacion Ibaan, Batangas.

Interment will be on Thursday, March 2, 2006 after the 2 p.m. Mass at St. James the Greater Parish, Ibaan, Batangas.

VENANCIO T. ILAO

Retiree of United Laboratories, Inc.

Peacefully joined his Creator on February 25, 2006 at the age of 66.

His body lies in state at Sta. Teresita Chapel, Sta Teresita Village, Marikina.

Interment will be tomorrow, March 1, at the Aglipay Cemetery after the 2 PM Mass.

DULCISIMO D. MARTINEZ

of Bacon, Sorsogon City and Davao City

peacefully joined the Lord on February 25, 2006 at the age of 82.

He will be surely missed by his beloved wife **Perla**; children **June** (†), **Ike, Marichu, Jojo, Tootsie** and **Lovelove**; brothers **Lans** and **Camilo**, in-laws, relatives and friends and by all of us who were given the grace to know and love him.

His body lies in state at the Cosmopolitan Funeral Parlor, Camus St., Davao City.

Interment will be on Thursday, March 2, 2006 at 1:00 p.m. at the Davao Memorial Park, Davao City.

RUDOLFO "Rudy" SIAOTONG LUCERO SR.

of Catbalogan, Samar

(May 21,1925 – February 24, 2006)

His loving wife, **Feliza** (†); children **Rudyboy & Emma, Vic & Libay, Georgie & Trudes, Lorelie & Danny, Maritess & Dan, Ric & Myrna, Pinky & Mark, Imelda & Boyet, Jean**; brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, grandchildren and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

His remains lie in state at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapel.

Interment will be on Thursday, March 2, 2006 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque.

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NOEMI BERMUDO LIZARDO

(MAYAPA, CALAMBA CITY and VIRAC, CATANDUANES)

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord last February 24, 2006, 4:30 PM at the age of 57.

Her husband **FRANCISCO**; children **NAOMI, NANETTE & JOJO, NOEMI FRANCES, NOEMI FRANCESCA & NOEMI PAULENE**; grandchildren **JOAN** and **NINA**; brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces and in-laws request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel 1, Loyola Memorial Park Chapels (inside Loyola Memorial Park), Marikina City.

Interment will be tomorrow, March 1, 2006 after the 2:00 PM Mass.

Children are fortunate if they have a father who is honest and does what is right. Proverbs 20:7

ENGR. DOMINADOR M. CEPEDA

April 13, 1907 – February 28, 1976

University of the Philippines Civil Engineering (1932);
Charter Member/Founder: BETA EPSILON Fraternity
Far East Olympics, Member (Baseball Team); "Golden Gloves University Boxer Awardee"
WORLD WAR II VETERAN: USAFFE 1st Lieut., CAPAS PRISONER of War Camp, 1942
BESANG PASS: USAFFIP-NL; Engineering Batallion, Commanding Officer (1943-45)
Ret. Lieut. Colonel, Phil. Army (1946)
BETA CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, INC.: Founder President
PHILIPPINE VETERANS BANK, Charter/Founding Director
MANILA LIONS CLUB, Charter – Founder

We, his children and family continue to miss his loving and guiding physical presence, Tatay, continues to live in our lives as a huge influence and model of a God-fearing man, a patriot who served his country well, an exemplary citizen and community member; but above all, a kind, loving, and compassionate father and "lolo" to us who knew him. He is forever enshrined in our hearts, with our beloved Nanay, his faithful wife, Remedios Rosales-Cepeda.

Please say a prayer for the repose of his soul.

RAUL R. CEPEDA and children Randy and Stella Cepeda; Sandy & Princess
DOMINADOR, JR. & LUCIA CEPEDA and Rafael Lucien
MARTIN & DULCE CEPEDA & Candice
LUIS & PATRICIA SISON and children Trisha, Camille, Luigi & Monique
ROBERTO & MA. LEONOR SISON and children Paolo, Robbie, Migs
GRACIA C. LARA & Janine

In Loving Memory

of Our Dearly Beloved

JOVENCIO L. VALEÑA

on his 12th Death Anniversary

Hoy Masses were held at the following churches:

St. Peter's Parish	Calaung, Quezon
St. Claire Monastery	Lopez, Quezon
Most Holy Rosary Parish	Lopez, Quezon
San Isidro Parish	Lopez, Quezon
San Diego De Alcala Parish	Gumaca, Quezon
Carmel of Our Lady	Gumaca, Quezon
Shrine of St. Vincent Ferrer	Gumaca, Quezon
Immaculate Concepcion Cathedral Parish	Cubao, Q.C.
Sacred Heart Parish	Kamuning, Q.C.
St. Paul The Apostle Parish	Timog Ave., Q.C.

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late FELICIDAD TABERNERO who died on October 2, 1985 was extrajudicially settled in accordance with the extrajudicial settlement with waiver of rights by the heirs duly executed before Notary Public Consul General Rolando Guzman of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada per doc WG-463 Series 536 O.R. No.888990; Consul Raul Hernandez, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada as per Doc 068; Page 116; Book 08; Series of 2005. (PDI-Feb 15, 22 & 28,2006)

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NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT CREMATION DATE & TIME	PLACE
Rogelio "Roger" Montevirgen	Chapel C-14, Q.C.	March 1, 2006/11:30 AM	Paz Crematory
Norberto Regala	Chapel B-7, Q.C.	Feb. 28, 2006/9:00 AM	Mla. Mem. Park Crematory Parañaque City

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People, Events & Products

UNILAB TURNS OVER ANTI-BIRD FLU MEDICINES

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Health Secretary Francisco Duque receive the initial batch of the US $1.25 million worth of anti-bird flu medicines from United Laboratories Inc (Unilab) during an outreach project in Taguig City last Feb. 14. The initial quality of 250,000 capsules is good for treatment of 25,000 persons. The balance of another 250,000 capsules will be available by end of April. Unilab's donation, which is consistent with its corporate character as a socially responsible company, is a response to government's call for assistance in helping the country prepare against a potential bird flu pandemic. Last Jan. 11, Unilab also donated P25 million worth of Enervon multivitamins to the Department of Agriculture to increase the body resistance of poultry workers in the identified 21 hot spots. Shown giving the donation are (from right) Unilab president and CEO Carlos Ejercito and VP and executive officer Mariano Tan Jr.

COFFEE PASSION AT UCC

These business executives know everything about coffee and have made it their lifetime commitment to share the best coffee to the biggest number of people. Hubert Young (right) and Shigenori Shigeta discuss the many blends now being offered by UCC. In this particular occasion they did a taste test on the UCC Rainforest Alliance Certified Coffee. The certification attests to the UCC farms' adherence to environmental standards specifically conserving critical wildlife, habitat, reforesting, recycling and reducing waste. UCC coffee beans meet all the rigid checks and balances and hence deserve the tag high quality coffee.

SMART 'S COMMITMENT TO SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

Smart Communication recently held the Smart Mini Badminton tournament at the Smashroom Badminton Court in Orambo, Pasig City. This is in line with its commitment to its sports development program. Shown in photo are (from left): Richard Sarmiento and Mike Jimenez (Level A champions men's doubles) together with Harrich Kubong and David Ty (Level A runner-up men's doubles). The tournament was sponsored by Smart Buddy and Talk and Text.

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INVITATION TO BID

The Insurance Commission (IC) invites eligible bidders to submit bids for the purchase of the following IT Equipments. Allotted budget is Ps2,500,000.00.

A. THREE (3) SERVERS
B. TEN (10) WORKSTATIONS (BRANDED)
C. TEN (10) LAPTOPS/NOTEBOOKS (BRANDED)
D. SIX (6) LASER PRINTERS

A complete set of Bid Documents can be acquired upon submission of a written application and upon payment of non-refundable fee of **TWO THOUSAND PESOS (Ps2,000.00)** from February 21, 2006. A pre-bid conference will be held on March 9, 2006 at 9:00 AM.

Bid proposal must be submitted in two (2) sealed envelopes and labeled as follows:

A. Eligibility Check Envelope containing:

1. Legal Documents,
2. Technical Documents;
3. Financial Documents; and
4. Other documents such as valid joint venture agreement, in case of a joint venture; and letter authorizing the BAC or its duly authorized representative to verify any or all of the documents submitted for eligibility check.

B. Technical and Financial Proposal Envelope

Eligibility check screening as well as the preliminary examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualifications of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to the Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Evaluation on Bids, Post qualifications and award of contract shall be governed by the provisions of RA 1984 and its implementing rules and regulations and other applicable government rules and regulations.

Deadline of submission of sealed bids shall not be later than 4:00 PM on March 22, 2006 and bids shall be opened at 9:00 AM of the following day at the Function Room, Insurance Commission, 1071 United Nations Avenue.

For inquiries, please contact Ms. Nancy V. Camaliga/Ariel S. Sim at Telephone Nos. 525-7521 and 404-1664, respectively.

IC assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate and indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

IC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any minor defects therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **PAMELA F. PITAS**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

Noted by:

(Sgd.) **EVANGELINE CRISOSTOMO-ESCOBILLO**
Insurance Commissioner

(PDI–Feb. 21 & 28 2006)

25th Annual Chest Convention

THE PHILIPPINE COLLEGE OF CHEST PHYSICIANS (PCCP) will hold its 25th Annual Chest Convention on Feb. 28 to March 3 at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City. With this year's theme, "PCCP on the Silver Screen: Prequels, Premieres and Previews in Pulmonary Medicine," key developments in pulmonology and critical care will be reviewed and highlighted side by side with dissertations on the state of the art and recent advances in the field. For inquiries on the annual convention or any activity of the PCCP, contact the secretariat at tel. nos. 924-9204, 927-0343; telefax number 924-0144; or e-mail pccp@zpdee.net.

Bits & Clips

Juan Luna CD launch at The Podium

MALLGOERS WILL HAVE THE RARE OPPORTUNITY TO WATCH SOME OF THE country's top musical talents perform in the launching of the CD track of the opera/libretto Spoliarium: Juan Luna tonight at 7 p.m. at The Podium's Lounge Area. The event is a project of the Music Theater Foundation of the Philippines in cooperation with The Podium. Written by the Philippines' top coloratura soprano Fides Cuyugan-Asencio and music by the foremost and sought after musical director Ryan Cayabyab, the opera Spoliarium: Juan Luna was well acclaimed during its performances at the Cultural Center of the Philippines in 2003. For inquiries, get in touch with Julius at tel. nos. 421-1898 and 439-0538.

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Asia Pacific College marks 12th milestone

ASIA PACIFIC COLLEGE (APC), CELEBRATES ITS 12TH ANNIVERSARY STARting Feb. 27. The week-long College Week observance which ends on March 4 will be held in the APC campus in Makati City. Invited to grace the celebration is a long roster of guests including principals and guidance counselors from various public and private high schools in the Greater Metro Manila Area. A series of entertainment offerings are calendared for guests and students alike. The festivities include a concert, "Rockwell My School," featuring Kamikazee, Typecast, Valley of Chrome and bands from APC, and other popular bands, a sportsfest, fashion show, in-house seminars, and film showings.

All-day clean with Charmee Feminine Wipes

IN TODAY'S FAST-PACED LIFE, GIRLS ON-THE-GO ALMOST FIND IT IMpossible to get bathroom breaks that they don't have time to wash anymore. Good thing there's Charmee Feminine Wipes, with its compact packaging, the pack easily slips in a woman's purse that makes it easy to carry around providing freshness whenever needed and making cleaning possible without the actual washing. Every soft and gentle tissue wipe is alcohol-free, hypoallergenic and has anti-bacterial ingredients. Its mild powder scent is sure to provide the user a clean and comfortable feeling. Priced at only P 21.50 for a pack with 10 pulls (SRP), Charmee Feminine Wipes is available in all leading supermarkets, groceries, and drugstores nationwide.

Love to cook? Join MyGreatFood Club

MYGREATFOOD CLUB PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR FOODIES TO LEARN and improve their culinary skills by enjoying special privileges and access to activities like cooking demonstrations, culinary workshops and livelihood and nutrition-related trainings and seminars. Plus, enjoy creative recipes as part of the quarterly newsletter mailed out to all members in the country. To know more about the club and upcoming events, visit their website at www.mygreatfood.com or send a self-addressed stamped envelope to San Miguel Purefoods Culinary Center, Legaspi cor. Eagle Sts., Ugong Pasig City 1604.

PNOC
PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City 1634
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5285 & 5288

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

Description of Items – Purchase Requisition No.	Approved Budget
Various Control Valves Spare Parts Under FGT 51938/ FGT 51939/ FGT 51941/FGT 51943/ FGT 51946	PHP 2, 279,000.00
Seamless Coil Capillary Tubing Under GQ 516720R1	PHP 21,200,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o the following buyers: **Roderick R. Cabantog** and **Anthony E. Ciriaco** starting **February 28, 2006**, from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on **March 8, 2006, 2:00 p.m.** at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to and registered with the PNOC-EDC Procurement and Materials Management Division, at the above address and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than **2:00 p.m.** (Procurement Department Office Wall Clock time) on **March 22, 2006**. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–Feb. 28 & March 7, 2006)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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City of San Fernando Pampanga
or call/fax (045) 961-4048
*please look for **Mr. Jess Yap***

MERCURY DRUG CONDUCTS OBL

On March 1, Mercury Drug celebrates its 61st anniversary by conducting the 'Operation Bigay Lunas' (OBL) in 61 cities and municipalities nationwide. The OBL is an annual, simultaneous, one-day free consultations and medicines for indigent patients. It aims to serve more than 120,000 indigents this year. This undertaking is strongly supported by its business partners, provincial governors, city and municipal mayors. This is Mercury Drug's way of thanking its customers who constantly patronize and support the company. The 'Operation Bigay Lunas' is part of Mercury Drug's social contribution to improve the quality of healthcare in the community.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills ·
City of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila

SEC CIRCULAR NO. 3
Series of 2006

TO : ALL CONCERNED
SUBJECT : PRINCIPAL OFFICE ADDRESS; ADDRESS OF EACH INCORPORATOR, DIRECTOR, TRUSTEE, OR PARTNER

In line with the "full disclosure requirement of existing laws, all corporations and partnerships applying for registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission should state in their Articles of Incorporation or Articles of Partnership the (i) specific address of their principal office, which shall include, if feasible, the street number, street name, barangay, city or municipality; and (ii) specific residence address of each incorporator, stockholder, director, trustee, or partner.

"Metro Manila" shall no longer be allowed as address of the principal office.

Additionally, all corporations are required to state in their General Information Sheet the specific residence address of each stockholder, officer, director or trustee.

Filings that do not comply with the foregoing requirements shall be considered as non-compliant with existing rules and regulations.

This Circular shall take effect after publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 16 February 2006.

(Sgd.) **FE B. BARIN**
Chairperson

(PDI-February 28, 2006)

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Send your ***Resume*** to **GQY Distribution Group Inc.** at **GQY Distributors Inc., Dolores Homesite Extension, Dolores, San Fernando Pampanga** or call/fax 045-9614048 and look for **Mr. Jess Yap.**

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BUSINESS

S. Korea firm to put up $720-M shipyard

Hanjin Industries' first overseas facility to be located in Subic

SOUTH KOREA'S HANJIN HEAVY Industries Co. on Monday said it would invest $720 million for the construction of a shipyard in the Philippines, as it looks to escape constraints on capacity in its home country.

Like its bigger rivals, Hanjin is trying to secure more expensive ship orders as vessel prices look set to weaken in coming quarters amid expectations that global trading volumes will soon slow down.

The Philippines is a familiar overseas market for the South Korean shipbuilder. Hanjin has been involved in building harbors, airports, highways and railways in the country over the past three decades.

"The new shipyard in the Philippines is based on our strategy to overcome growth limits because of the limited site in our local shipyard and increase competitiveness in new shipbuilding orders," the company said in a statement.

Hanjin said it had already won an order from French-based global container shipping company, CMA CGM, to build 4 container ships of 4,300 TEU (twenty foot equivalent units). The orders are collectively worth $250 million for the new shipyard.

A Hanjin spokesman said over the telephone that CMA CGM had expressed its intention to help finance construction and to participate in other overseas projects.

Hanjin's rivals, including the world's top shipbuilder Hyundai Heavy Industries Co., and number two player Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering, have been building overseas shipyards in China and Vietnam.

The first overseas shipyard for Hanjin will be located in Subic, and will cover about 2.3 million square meters.

The investment would span about 10 years from March this year, the company said. Hanjin aims to make the first vessel delivery from the shipyard in June, 2008.

Hanjin will lease the shipyard site for 50 years, eight of which will be exempt from corporate taxes.

The company said recent political uncertainties in the Philippines were unlikely to affect the deal. *Reuters*

IT firms expect severe beating over RP unrest

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TECHNOLOGY FIRMS ARE EXPECTED TO SUFfer a severe beating—losing vital business process outsourcing and shared services contracts—as a result of President Macapagal-Arroyo's declaration of a state of national emergency, according to an international research group.

An advisory from the local unit of Canada-based XMG Inc. said the short-term impact of events that occurred in the country over the weekend would be "moderately severe."

"(Contracts) would be affected in light of the negative sentiment often invoked by the unpalatable statement of 'a state of emergency,'" XMG said. "(But this) is more due to insufficient understanding of the real meaning behind events of social unrest in Philippine society.

"More far-reaching ... is the effect on the precariously limited but highly skilled and very mobile IT work force."

There are about 304,000 people working in the industry today.

XMG said continuing political uncertainty could drive more and more of these skilled people to look for jobs abroad.

Still, the firm said, the erosion of business sentiment in the information technology-enabled services sector would recover swiftly in less than a year, provided there were no further political unrest.

"Such nuisances often occur in the Philippines, but have no fundamental negative effects on economic growth," the firm said. "The overall industry outlook is between neutral and positive, with cautious optimism."

BSP tightens rules on bank trust accounts

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS HAS drawn up tighter rules on trust accounts offered by banks for long-term estate planning, in an effort to curb the use of such instruments to circumvent the reserve requirement.

The circular on "living trusts," which the BSP's supervision and examination sector submitted to the Monetary Board, prescribed six stringent criteria to ensure that the instruments would no longer be used to acquire short-term profits while avoiding the reserve requirement.

Living trusts, which are not as tightly regulated as the common trust funds (CTFs), are instruments for estate planning being managed by banks' trust departments for the heirs or beneficiaries of estate owners.

They are like a will that governs the assets of absentee principals for their beneficiaries over a long-term period.

Over the last two years, the BSP has observed an unusual surge in "living trusts" as soon as it issued a new circular requiring banks to phase out CTFs and shift to a superior product called unit investment trust funds.

Instead of shifting to UITFs, some banks were suspected of putting in more transactions into living trusts. *Doris C. Dumlao*

Atlas firm spends ₱106M to clean up Toledo mines

By Christine A. Gaylican

ALAKOR CORP, THE MOTHER FIRM OF ATLAS Consolidated Mining and Development Corp., has spent a total of P106 million for the rehabilitation of its copper mines in Toledo, Cebu.

Alakor has been funding Atlas subsidiary Carmen Copper Corp. to clean up the 400-hectare Toledo copper mines since June 2005, Atlas vice president Rodrigo Cal said.

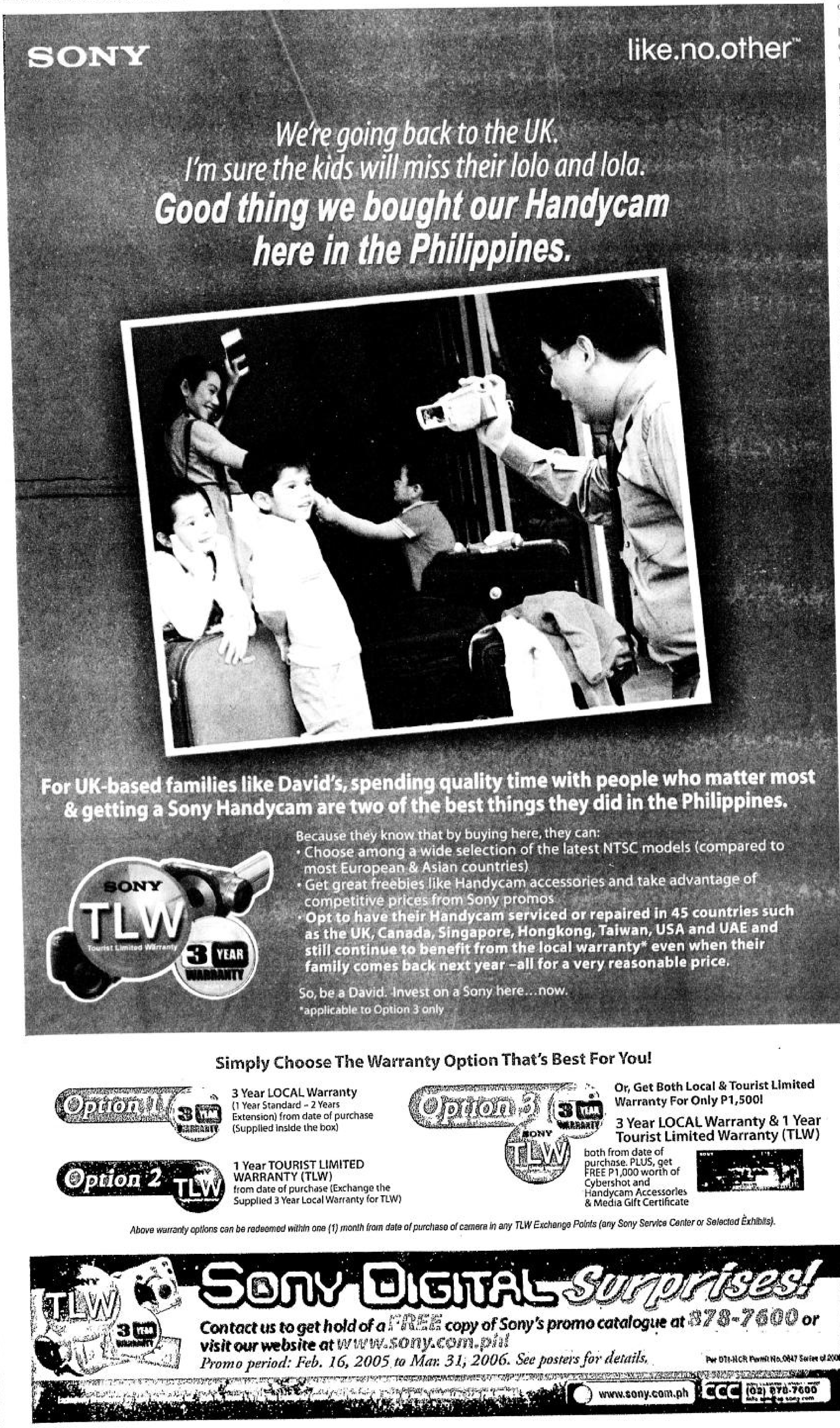
Cal said that Carmen Copper is expected to complete the rehabilitation in time for the mines' reopening in the last quarter of this year.

Atlas' copper project in Cebu was started in 1955 and covered some 5,000 ha. But operations were stopped in 1994 when copper prices dropped in the world market. The following year, a flooding occurred in its tunnels.

The Toledo facility is capable of producing 42,000 metric tons of copper a day. In the 1970s and 1980s, Atlas employed over 14,000 workers to work on the mines. The company plans to hire 2,700 people when it resumes operations.

Atlas will conduct local and international public offerings before the year ends and has selected Macquarie Securities as its financial adviser.

The undertaking will allow the company to raise part of the $170 million it needs to operate its copper mines in Cebu.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LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY 2BU • THURSDA

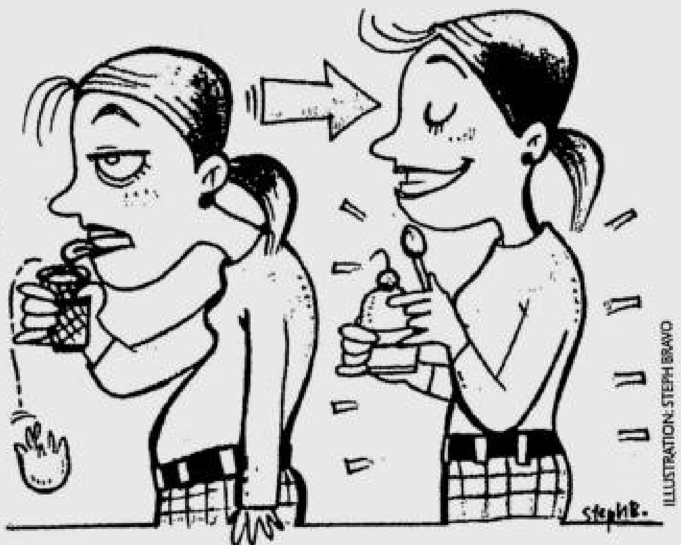


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Stand straight, look slimmer

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

IT HAS BEEN SAID THE fastest way to lose a couple of pounds is to stand straight. This is true.

You don't actually lose any weight but good posture can make you look like you are slimmer than you really are.

When you stand properly, your chest is lifted and shoulders are drawn back. This makes your chest appear broader if you are a man and your breasts look higher and firmer if you are a woman.

With the chest lifted, your abdomen is pulled in instead of "hanging out." Your waist will appear to be at least one or two inches smaller. You will look taller and leaner.

Let's face it, no matter how expensive your clothes, haircut or makeup, it is very difficult to look attractive with rounded shoulders, a sunken chest and a protruding belly. Not only that, poor posture can make you look old before your time. It can even make you look depressed or insecure.

Lower back

Poor posture doesn't just make you look unattractive; it can also cause problems in your joints and muscles. The spine is wonderfully designed to take all kinds of loads if aligned properly.

But, if it is thrown out of alignment by improper posture, pain can eventually appear in the lower back, neck, shoulders, and even the hips and knees.

Posture faults

Barbara Brehm, exercise physiology professor at Smith College, says the most common posture problems are rounded shoulders, a forward head (chin jutting forward), a protruding abdomen and swayback (an exaggerated lower back curve). She says all four may occur together.

Many people have poor posture because "everything we do brings us forward—working at a desk, reading, eating, talking to someone over a table," according to Susan Bergholtz, former chief physical therapist at New York Hospital. She believes that "80 percent of all back pain and 95 percent of all pain between the shoulder blades is due to bad posture."

Emotional problems

In his book "BodyMind," Ken Dikewall claims that chronic poor posture may be related to the chronic emotional state of an individual.

Examples of these emotional states are repressed anger, depression and low self-esteem. He says for these people, poor posture cannot be cured with exercise or physical therapy until these negative attitudes and emotional problems are taken care of first.

Muscular imbalance

Many cases of poor posture are caused by an imbalance in muscular strength and flexibility. Take the example of rounded shoulders. A person who slouches while doing long hours of desk work may, over time, develop shortness and tightness in the muscles of the chest and front of the shoulders.

Meanwhile, the muscles in the rear of the shoulders and between the shoulder blades become long and loose. An imbalance between the muscles in front and behind develops. If this person would do exercises to stretch the muscles in front and exercises to strengthen the muscles behind, his/her rounded shoulders can be "fixed."

Standing correctly

How does one stand correctly? Have a partner view you from the side. The center of your head, shoulders and hips should fall in line. There should be a slight inward curve in the neck, a slight outward curve in the upper back and slight inward curve in the lower back. When these curves are exaggerated or flattened, the spine is misaligned.

Then have your partner view you from the front. There should be an imaginary line from your nose to your navel (belly button) to a point between your feet. Your hips and shoulders should be parallel to each other. If one hip or shoulder is higher than the other, you may have scoliosis or a lateral curvature of the spine. Consult an orthopedic doctor.

Conscious habit

If you have been standing incorrectly for a number of years or decades, your poor posture will seem "natural" to your body. When you first learn to stand or sit correctly, it will not seem right. It might even seem a little uncomfortable.

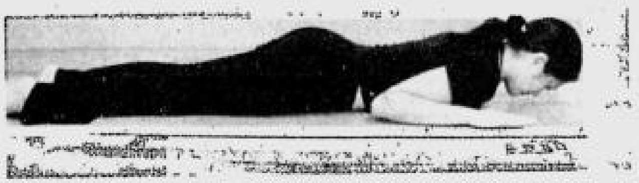
To correct your posture, you will need to make standing properly a conscious habit. Carolyn Winuk, a physical therapist at the Richard M. Bachrach Center for Sports and Osteopathic Medicine in New York City, developed some techniques you can use throughout the day:

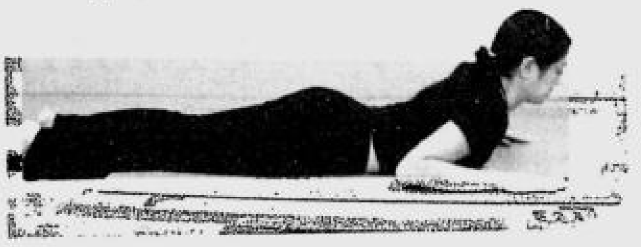
- To prevent rounded shoulders: Think of tucking your shoulder blades into your back pocket.
- To prevent a protruding belly and/or swayback: Picture zipping your tightest pair of jeans. Draw your lower abdomen in and away from the zipper.
- To prevent your chin from jutting forward (the "turtle" look): Imagine a taut line from the bottom of your chin to the top of your chest.
- To prevent your spine from resembling a "letter C": Visualize a string gently pulling the top of your head to the ceiling while you are sitting and standing.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Unsupported cobra





THIS YOGA-INSPIRED exercise strengthens the muscles of the back and stretches the muscles of the chest and abdomen.

Equipment:

Exercise or yoga mat

Exercise technique:

1. Lie down on your stomach with your legs together and your arms bent, your hands directly under your shoulder joint.
2. Keep your face an inch or two off the floor.
3. Contract the muscles in your back and lift your upper body.
4. Hold the position for the desired amount of time without pushing down on your hands.
5. Slowly lower down to the starting position.

Performance tips:

1. Lengthen your neck and press your shoulders away from your ears as you contract the back muscles and lift the upper body.
2. Do not use your arms at any time during the exercise to help lift or lower your upper body. That's why it is called the "unsupported" cobra.
3. Do not throw your head backwards when you lift the upper body. The head and neck should just "come along for the ride" when you contract your back muscles.
4. To relieve pressure on the lower back, spread legs wider than the hips.

Repetitions:

Hold the position for three to five breaths. One breath means inhaling and exhaling. Make sure that your inhalation and exhalation are consistent in length and depth.

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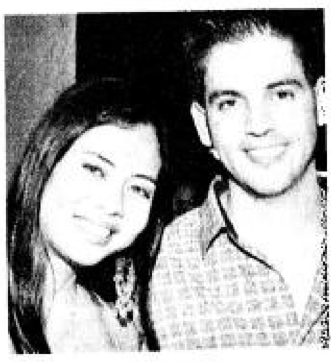
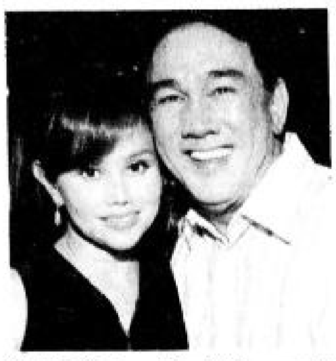
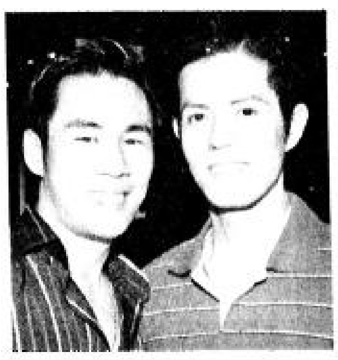

DJ MILES, Jonathan Potter


SULTRY singer Vernie Varga and Mezze's Bobong Velez

SULTRY songbirds Geneva Cruz and Rachel Alejandro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PRESIDENT Alejandro Toledo of Peru

CHONG Siak Ching, Abac member

CNN'S Lorraine Hahn

PRIME Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore

PHILIPPINES' Myrna T. Yao with Michael Ducker, Hyun Jae-hyun and Gary G. Benanav

Blushing welcome for era of bloom

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

IT WAS EVERYTHING THEY PROMISED it would be, *palanggas*. The fun pink invite said, "It's going to be a night of blush to welcome a new era of bloom." Sent by CircuitAsia, it was for the hot slambang gig at Greenbelt's dining and party hotspot, Mezze, natch!

The happening was a showcase for CircuitAsia's "products," like Gift Foundation, Generation Pink (GP) Magazine, the website Fabulous.com and Creative Resources & Management, a one-stop media solutions provider.

CircuitAsia's main man in Manille, the articulate and consummate gay rights advocate **Ding Pastrana**, said, "The affair was staged to show our enduring commitment to a passion that has become a growing life force in the community."

Ding P. and his talented creative rah-rah team led by hotshot artist **Kenji Nuñez** transformed Mezze into a breathtaking setting decked with swatches of muslin in crimson and pink.

International host **Kevin Aviance** jetted in from the Big Apple to keep the action bubbling and sizzling. Eye-catcher **Vernie Varga** brought the house down with a hot performance worthy of her title as The Vamp. R&B diva **Ella Mae Saison** wrapped it all up with her usual soulful and passionate performance, dahlings.

Filled with the high energy were beautiful jeweler couple **Gabby** and **Maritess Panlilio**; beauty contest royalty **Ramon Monzon** and **Lorraine Schuck** of Carousel Productions; brilliant composer-columnist **Dero Pedero**; stunning **Che Singson**, with her attractive cousins (it must run in the *famille*) **Jean Chua** and **Matet Tiongson**; former beauty queen **Peachy Veneracion**; sexy video jocks **Asia Agcaoili** and **Marielle Rodriguez**; and radio jocks **Li'l Joey, Slick Rick, Mighty Mike, Drei Carlo Tirona, Franco Mabanta** and **DJ Ba**.

Partyphiles **Amiel Cabanlig** and DJ **Mojo Jojo**, who were celebrating their birthdays, were toasted by Mezze top gun **Bobong Velez**.

This fab Pink Party at Mezze raised more than a million pesos from donations by the supportive and concerned invitees. That made Ding Pastrana happy and inspired to work harder to make the Pink Community a respectable and responsible member of the global community, natch! Right on, Ding P!

RP representative

That fascinating woman of substance, incredibly brilliant **Myrna T. Yao**, chair of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), was designated by President **Macapagal-Arroyo**, no less, *palanggas*, to represent the Philippines as "one of the Apec Business Advisory Council (Abac) members" in the two-day Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) summit forum held in Busan, Korea.

During the summit, Myrna Y. had a dialogue with leaders of the 21 Apec economies. She discussed global issues with awesome personalities like Prime Minister **Thaksin Shinawatra** of Thailand, Prime Minister **John Howard** of Australia, Prime Minister **Lee Hsien Loong** of Singapore, President **Vicente Fox Quesada** of Mexico and President **Roh Moo-Hyun** of Korea.

"Abac was established as a permanent body to act as an independent voice of business within the Apec process. It is the sole nongovernmental entity that has an official role in the Apec Economic Leaders Summit through a formal dialogue."

Myrna Y. explained to me why she definitely had to attend this awesome meeting. She said the developing economy would need from the developed economy assistance in E-commerce and technology. With the rapid advance in technology, the gap between the two economies could widen.

Summing it all up, *palanggas*, it's crystal clear that Abac recommends future initiatives that would improve the overall business environment in the region.

After the shop-talk, we enjoyed our yummy lunch at her favorite resto, Via Mare in Greenbelt, *palanggas*.

FCCP room

Those super women of culture and organizers of charity will be adding another beautiful feather in their cap. Tomorrow, March 1, the Friends for Cultural Concerns of the Philippines Inc. (FCCP) formally inaugurates the much-needed FCCP Room, which these women donated to the National Arts Gallery of the National Museum on P. Burgos Street, in Manille, *palanggas*.

Snipping the ceremonial ribbon during the opening will be founding chair, hotshot philanthropist **Chito Madrigal-Collantes**, no less, and FCCP super dedicated president and woman of substance and style **Amelia Romero Ablaza**.

During the event, Alay at Pasasalamat, sponsors and donors of FCCP's tons of projects will get plaques of appreciation. Performing are the renowned Manila Symphony Orchestra and world-class soprano **Camille Lopez Molina**, the only soloist of the fab event, dahlings.

Alay at Pasasalamat is headed by FCCP's director, multifaceted Southern gent **Boysie Villavicencio**. It is co-chaired by civic-oriented women **Helen Ong, Cristina Galang Caedo** and **Mabel Abaño**.

It's a must-go-to affair, which we definitely will not miss, *palanggas*.

FCCP officers and directors: (seated) Lulu Castañeda, Cez Manalo, Karen Macasaet, Mellie Ablaza, Myrna Borromeo, Beth Cristobal, Nene Leonor, (standing) Mars Lambino, Chit Gohu, Fortune Ledesma, Boysie Villavicencio, Chloe Romulo-Periquet, Mari Lacson, Teresita Liboro and Carrie Bautista

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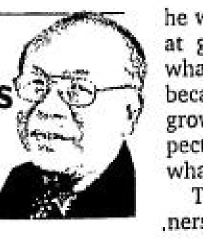
Rudolf and Michelle—spiritual partners

INNER AWARENESS



Jaime T. Licauco

Part III

TO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE the dynamics of the relationship between a couple, like Rudolf and Michelle, which I related in the previous column, it is important to introduce the concept of what Gary Zukav, in his book "Seat of the Soul," calls "spiritual partnership" as contrasted to marriage.

"The underlying premise of a spiritual partnership," according to Zukav, "is a sacred commitment between the partners to assist each other's spiritual growth. "Spiritual partners are able to distinguish between personality and soul and, therefore, they are able to discuss the dynamics between them, their interactions, on less emotionally bound ground than husbands and wives. That ground does not exist within the consciousness of marriage."

Why not? Because marriage, as he points out, was originally intended to assist physical survival. The couple needed to bond to protect themselves, their property and children against the harsh realities of the environment. Later, of course, the institution of marriage became necessary to provide legitimacy in political succession and smooth transfer of property from one generation to another.

No equality

Spiritual partnership cannot exist within the context of marriage, as we know it, because the latter is not based on equality of partners. Marriage presupposes certain duties and expectations that may not be conducive to spiritual growth.

A wife is expected to have duties separate or different from those of the husband. The objective is physical and economic survival.

The institution of marriage, as we know it today, is no longer functional for people whose consciousness transcends the physical realm and whose needs for spiritual growth cannot be met within it. Marriage is now being replaced, according to Zukav, by a new archetype that is designed to assist spiritual growth.

"When you commit to a spiritual partnership with another human being," says Zukav, "you bring the energy of the archetype of spiritual partnership into the physical arena. You begin to form and to live by the values, perceptions and actions that reflect equality with your partner and commitment to his or her spiritual development and your own... that's how spiritual partnership works."

Complete trust

One underlying characteristic of a spiritual relationship is complete or absolute trust in each other. Each learns to trust not only each other but also one's ability to grow together. One more important point: "You learn that you put your partnership most at risk by avoiding that which you are most afraid will destroy it."

When Rudolf agreed to let his partner, Michelle, go out alone one evening with Rene in Zurich, he was putting their relationship at great risk because he knew what they were about to do. But because he was committed to the growth of his partner in all aspects, he allowed her to have what she wanted.

That did not destroy their partnership. It might even have strengthened it. After that incident, both realized they still wanted to be together so much so that, two weeks later, Rudolf even allowed Michelle to stay with Rene for several days. A year later, I learned Rudolf formally married Michelle.

Human relationships in the Philippines are light years away from this level of trust and commitment of a spiritual partnership, achieved only by two people with the same level of consciousness.

It cannot happen overnight. It must be nurtured over many years of trial and experimentation, even to the extent of putting the relationship at great risk. But it is worth all that!

Essentially wrong

I have long suspected there was something essentially wrong with marriage, but I could not pin it down. Something should replace it but I did not know what.

Gary Zukav and other writers articulated for me what I believe a true human relationship should be. Call it spiritual relationship, soul partnership, even sacred sex. The concept is exciting and is more soul-satisfying than our present institution of marriage.

But how many in this country will be courageous enough to embark on such an uncharted journey of the soul? Very few indeed!

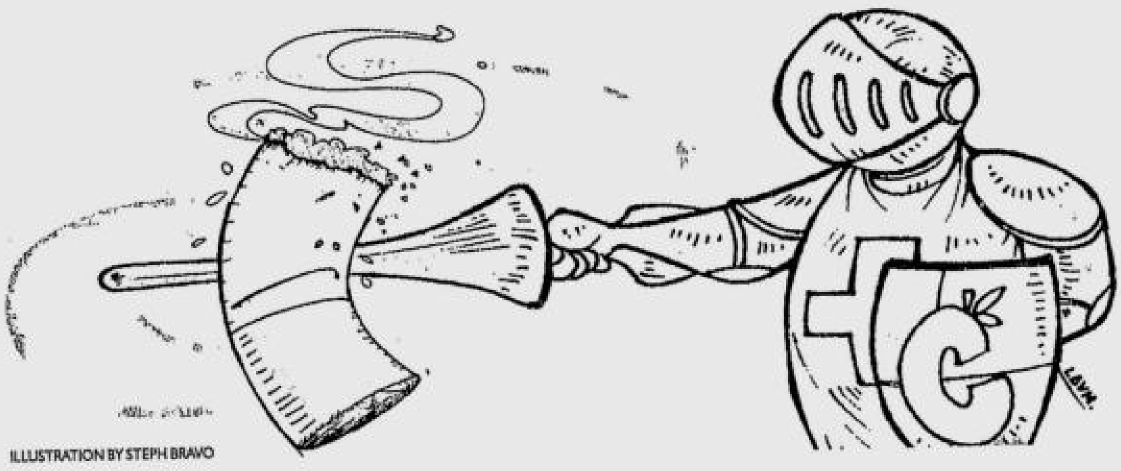


ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Guide for making informed choices about lifestyle

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

THE SAYING THE BEST defense is a good offense should apply not just to the battlefield but also to health and to life. Here are bits of information that can guide you in making informed decisions about your lifestyle.

Aging

No need to fear it. Fight it. Even if the clock has been ticking since birth. There is evidence that if you accept and follow certain principles, you can begin to defy time. Understand that aging is influenced by:

- **Genetic disposition.** Study your family lineage and observe how your parents and ancestors have aged.
- **Time.** One cannot control its passage.
- **Toxin buildup.** These speed up aging: air pollution, GMO or genetically modified organism, cigarette smoke (you don't need to smoke, inhaling is enough) and pesticides.
- **Sun exposure.** The effect of the sun on the skin is inflammation, which leads to wrinkles.
- **Stress-exhaustion,** or overworking the body and mind, can age you faster.

What to do

- Don't smoke.
- Avoid chemically laced foods.
- Eat vegetables and fruits.
- Exercise regularly.
- Get enough rest/relaxation and sleep.
- Avoid stress.
- Limit calories: Include omega-3 fatty acids in your diet, control consumption of salt, sugar and caffeine.
- Detox your body regularly (once a month is ideal) via vegetable juicing (or simply coconut water).
- Take antioxidant/supplements that may help: Alpha-lipoic acid, 600 mg/day; CoQ10, 150 mg daily; magnesium, 350-500 mg daily; selenium, 200-400 mcg daily; glutathione, (combined with alpha-lipoic acid and vitamin C; Lucida brand has this combination).

Herbal supplements like aged garlic (Kyolic) can enhance health and fight aging.

Cold fighter

There is more to life than Echinacea, the well-known cold fighter. Today, there are mighty elements in Chinese and Indian (Ayurvedic) medicine that have been rediscovered.

- **Andrographis** (available at GNC). A review study, published by Plant Medica on a study of a researcher from the University of Plymouth and Exeter, concluded that cold and flu suffering of 900 people were alleviated with this herb.
- **Eleuthero,** also called Siberian root/ginseng, can prevent the onset of flu or cold by strengthening one's ability to fight stress.
- **Beta-glucan,** an immune system stimulant, has the capacity to fight invading microorganism. It is naturally found in oats, barley and Maitake mushrooms.

When you are down with a cold:

- Keep warm.
- Take a healing tea like green, black or herbal, although herbals like ginger seem best.

Ginger Zest Tea: Grate ¼ tsp of fresh ginger. Pour boiling water on it. Steep for 5 minutes. Strain. Sip slowly.

- Take hot broth or soup.
- Laugh your way to healing.

Goodbye, illness

Nobody wants to get sick. There are ways to prevent it from happening too often.

- Keep yourself in good health. An unbalanced diet will make your body acidic.
- Breakfast is a good start. Avoid sugary cereals, baked goods, coffee and dairy. Have fruits and a veggie juice (carrot apple or cocowater-carro).
- Drink alkaline water daily.
- Avoid yeast and products with yeast.
- Watch your weight.
- Avoid red meat.
- Take fish oils, raw nuts, salads.
- Use sea salt (which is alkaline) instead of table salt.
- Eliminate acidic waste via sweating through exercise.
- Take probiotics (friendly bacteria) daily. Take your vitamins-supplements daily.
- Meditate/pray daily.
- Laugh. Laughter is still one of the best medicines.

Love and light!

Smart Text Service on Beauty and Wellness—CQ to 2966

Reference: Let's Live Magazine, December 2005 issue

Avoid 'heartache' this heart month

THE HEART IS THE MOST HARDWORKING organ in the body. It works round the clock, tirelessly pumping blood to nourish the body and keep it alive.

Despite its strength, the heart has a delicate anatomy and tires with age.

Cardiovascular disease, the heart's most lethal enemy, is the leading cause of death in the Philippines. It is caused by factors like hypertension, smoking, and lack of exercise.

But the disease is largely preventable. Even those who have had the disease could live rich, fulfilling lives with the right lifestyle, attitude and medication.

Dr. James Wee, internal medicine specialist and Pfizer's cluster physician for metabolism and urology, suggests, among other, less fat and carbohydrates in the diet, no smoking, moderate exercise for 30 minutes a day, at least three times a week.

Except for factors such as age and gender, Wee says most risk factors for cardiovascular disease stem from a person's lifestyle. Healthy living early in life can reduce the risk of getting the disease.

But cardiologist Anthony Leachon, president of the Philippine College of Pharmaceutical Medicine, says the demands of modern living have forced many people to resort to convenient but unhealthy practices.

Leachon says medication is necessary for a person who already suffers from hypertension, high cholesterol, and other risk factors.

Studies have shown that proper medication can significantly lower cholesterol and control hypertension.

Dr. Kiko Tranquilino, Pfizer's cluster physician for cardiology, stresses the importance of correct dosage and compliance. He says people with the disease have to take medicines for life. Patients cannot stop when they start feeling better.

Laundry with nature's sweet scents

CRABTREE & EVELYN INTRODUCES FINE Fabric Wash in Rosewater and Lavender for laundry with nature's sweet smells.

Clean, fresh, sweet-smelling clothes and bed linens feel extremely luxurious and give immeasurable pleasure.

Rosewater and lavender are two of nature's most beautiful bouquets.

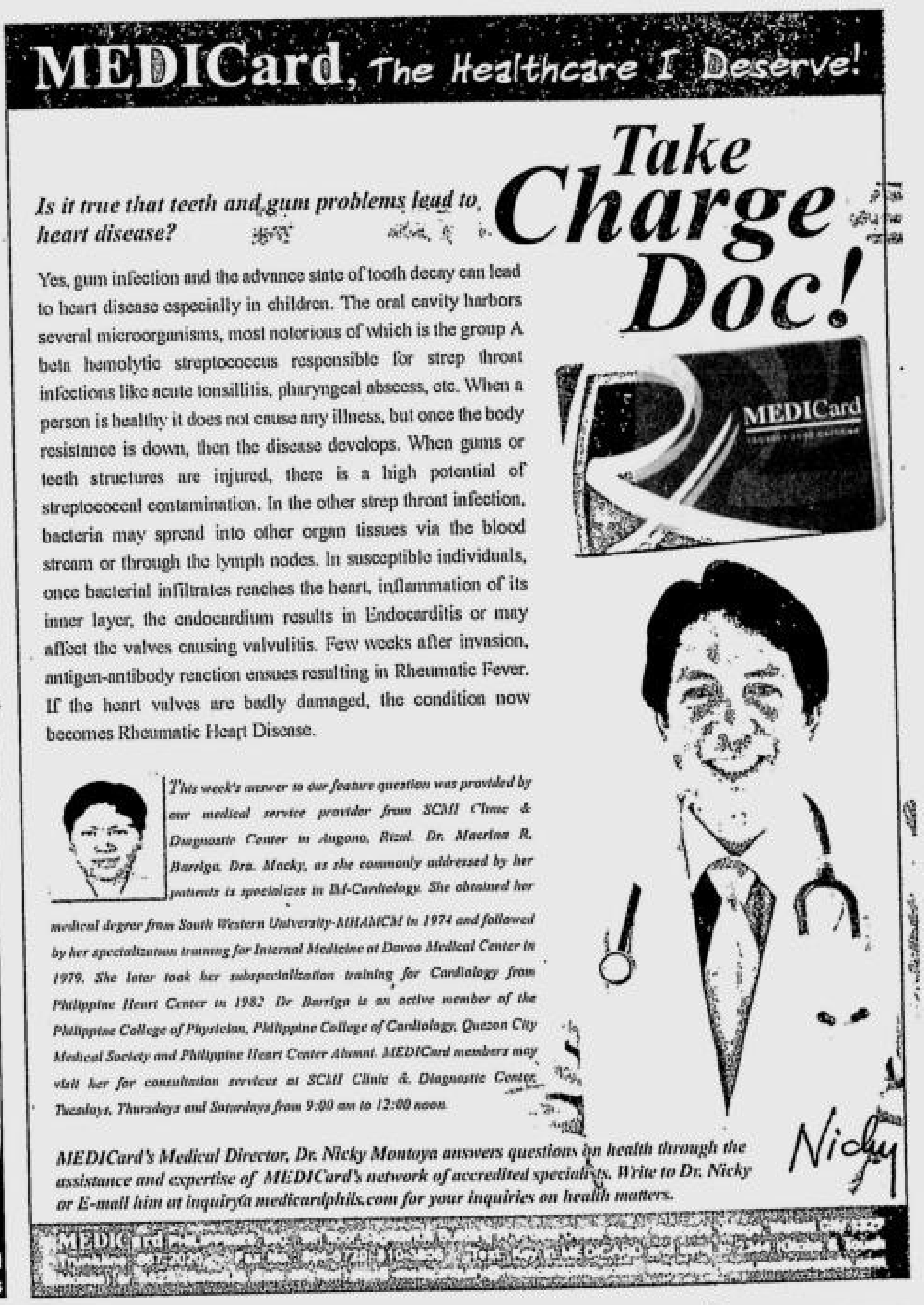
Crabtree & Evelyn's laundry washes provide precious care and perfect protection for garments and linens, leaving them delightfully scented but impeccably laundered. They are gentle on fabrics but tough on dirt, extremely safe for different kinds of fabric, including delicates, especially sweaters, and fine washables like lingerie and wool.

To maintain laundered freshness for clothes and linen, complete the laundry cycle with Crabtree & Evelyn's Linen Mist in Lavender and Rosewater. Iron reservoirs filled with Linen Mist will steam-scent clothes. Or Linen Mist can be sprayed directly onto clothes and sheets before use or wear.

Meanwhile, visit the Rockwell Vintage Bazaar March 18-19 and get a chance to win luxurious Crabtree & Evelyn products. The event showcases Manila designers and entrepreneurs.

ROSEWATER Fine Fabric Wash and Linen Mist products

Milk Magic®
Meryll Soriano
Only 46.50* XX per Liter
*Suggested Retail Price (price might vary in some stores)
Full Cream
Low Fat
Chocolate
Also available in 250 ml for only Php 14.50



MEDICard, The Healthcare I Deserve!
Take Charge Doc!

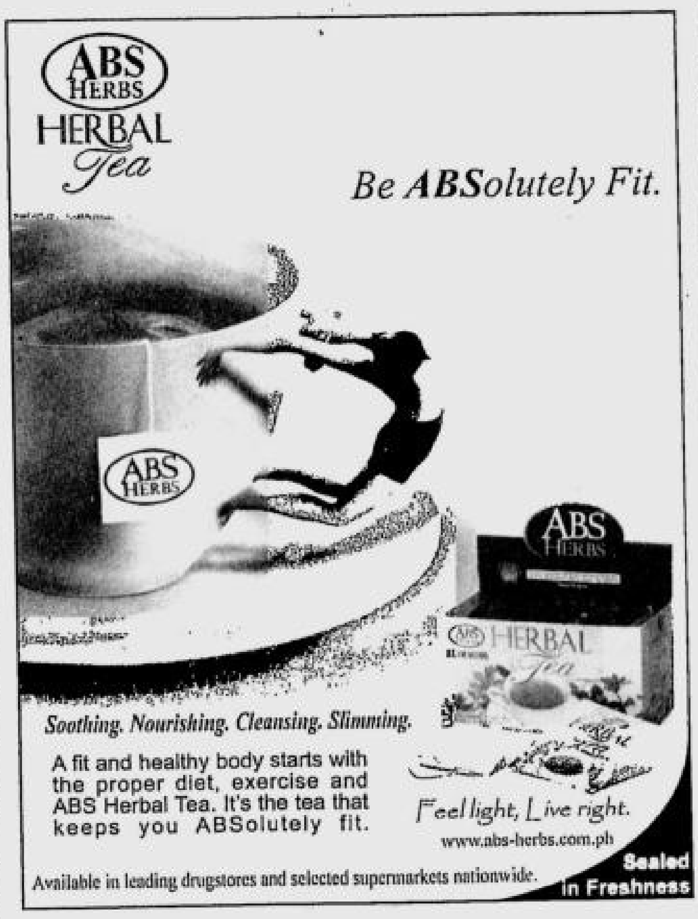
Is it true that teeth and gum problems lead to heart disease?

Yes, gum infection and the advance state of tooth decay can lead to heart disease especially in children. The oral cavity harbors several microorganisms, most notorious of which is the group A beta hemolytic streptococcus responsible for strep throat infections like acute tonsillitis, pharyngeal abscess, etc. When a person is healthy it does not cause any illness, but once the body resistance is down, then the disease develops. When gums or teeth structures are injured, there is a high potential of streptococcal contamination. In the other strep throat infection, bacteria may spread into other organ tissues via the blood stream or through the lymph nodes. In susceptible individuals, once bacterial infiltrates reaches the heart, inflammation of its inner layer, the endocardium results in Endocarditis or may affect the valves causing valvulitis. Few weeks after invasion, antigen-antibody reaction ensues resulting in Rheumatic Fever. If the heart valves are badly damaged, the condition now becomes Rheumatic Heart Disease.

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our medical service provider from SCMI Clinic & Diagnostic Center in Angono, Rizal. Dr. Macrina R. Barriga. Dra. Macky, as she commonly addressed by her patients is specializes in IM-Cardiology. She obtained her medical degree from South Western University-MHAMCM in 1974 and followed by her specialization training for Internal Medicine at Davao Medical Center in 1979. She later took her subspecialization training for Cardiology from Philippine Heart Center in 1982. Dr Barriga is an active member of the Philippine College of Physician, Philippine College of Cardiology, Quezon City Medical Society and Philippine Heart Center Alumni. MEDICard members may visit her for consultation services at SCMI Clinic & Diagnostic Center, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon.

Nicky

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.



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Approved by DTI-NCR

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*Promo applies only to 24/7 Text Unlimited ₱150 & ₱50 loads.
*Free Call Time and Unlimited Service apply to local Sun-to-Sun calls and texts.

See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0637, Series of 2006.

The privilege of self-regulation

THE WORD PRIVILEGE CONNOTES A VARIETY OF ideas: a benefit, an advantage and something that is bestowed as a special concession. In simple terms, a privilege is something that not everyone can enjoy, and is usually available only to a distinct few.

And it is just as well that the Advertising Board of the Philippines (AdBoard) has adopted the theme "Industry Self-Regulation: A Privilege" to underscore the organization's direction as it embarks on a more dynamic and empowered era with the induction of a new set of officers and directors today.

Advertising is a powerful medium that has the potential to shape perceptions and opinions of the general public, with the end in view of influencing their choices on what products to buy, or what services to avail of. Advertising makes use of a variety of literary devices to put a message across. But like everything else, the freedom to employ such creative devices must be tempered by sensitivity and responsibility. And this is what the AdBoard, as the umbrella organization of various advertising groups and associations, has been advocating through self-regulation. The concept of self-regulation underscores truthful and responsible advertising, as well as high degree of professionalism among practitioners because it fosters the underlying principles of responsibility and accountability from the practitioner towards his public.

While there are a number of government regulatory agencies such as the Department of Trade and Industry, the Bureau of Food and Drugs and others, it is still the primary responsibility of the practitioners themselves to see to it that strict standards are drawn up and adhered to in the pursuit of their work. Other countries like Ireland and Australia also have independent self-regulatory bodies - similar to the Philippines' AdBoard—that promote and ensure the highest standards of advertising in the interest of the public.

Under the principle of self-regulation, the AdBoard monitors the contents of advertisements through its Advertising Content Regulation Committee or ACRC and trade conducts and practices via the Trade Practices and Conduct Committee or TPCC. Specific association codes, Memorandums of Agreement, the Trade Practices and Conduct Manual and certain government laws likewise guide the TPCC in the promotion, protection and uplifting of advertising practices.

Why then should "self-regulation" be considered a privilege, when the very phrase itself indicates rules, restraints and even control? Because corollary to the principle of self-regulation is the freedom—more explicitly the privilege as well as the advantage—to exercise choices and sound judgment, challenging practitioners to employ creative methods that would put their message across while maintaining responsibility and truth in advertising. Self-regulation is likewise an affirmation of respect towards industry players, because there is the implicit recognition that those who practice self-regulation have the maturity to temper their work with truth, honesty and fairness—traits that are still strong and valued in the Filipino culture.

Practitioners, however, must also be cognizant of the fact that a privilege can be taken away, especially if is abused or misused. That is why it is critical that respect for the set rules and regulations regarding the responsible practice of advertising be observed. As the newly elected AdBoard chair Ma. Teresa "Matec" Villanueva had said, the AdBoard will continue to be a beacon of self-regulation and professionalism in the industry as it takes on a new and more dynamic era and further strengthen its partnership with member associations.

AdBoard will continue to be a beacon of self-regulation and professionalism in the industry as it takes on a new and more dynamic era and further strengthen its partnership with member associations

ADBOARD

Messages

My warmest felicitations to all the members of the Advertising Board of the Philippines, Inc. (AdBoard) as you welcome and induct your new set of officers and directors.

The Advertising Board of the Philippines has through the years been an active partner of government in socio-economic transformation. Your efforts to become a catalyst for national growth manifest your dynamic resolve to live up to your social responsibilities to the nation.

The occasion gives you a great opportunity to focus on excellence and strive harder to elevate your profession to global standards. May your cohesiveness as a group strengthen your commitment to making advertising a flourishing industry that upholds public interest and responsive to the challenges of our time.

I call on all of you to unite behind government's efforts to improve moral standards in our society through values formation to promote good governance and fight poverty. With all sectors of society working together in the spirit of unity and patriotism, I am confident that we can beat the odds and secure a progressive future for all Filipinos.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

Our warmest greetings to the Advertising Board of the Philippines (AdBoard) as you hold your Induction of 2006 Officers and Directors.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) recognizes and values the advertising industry's noteworthy contributions to the development and promotion not only of consumer welfare, but also of our economy.

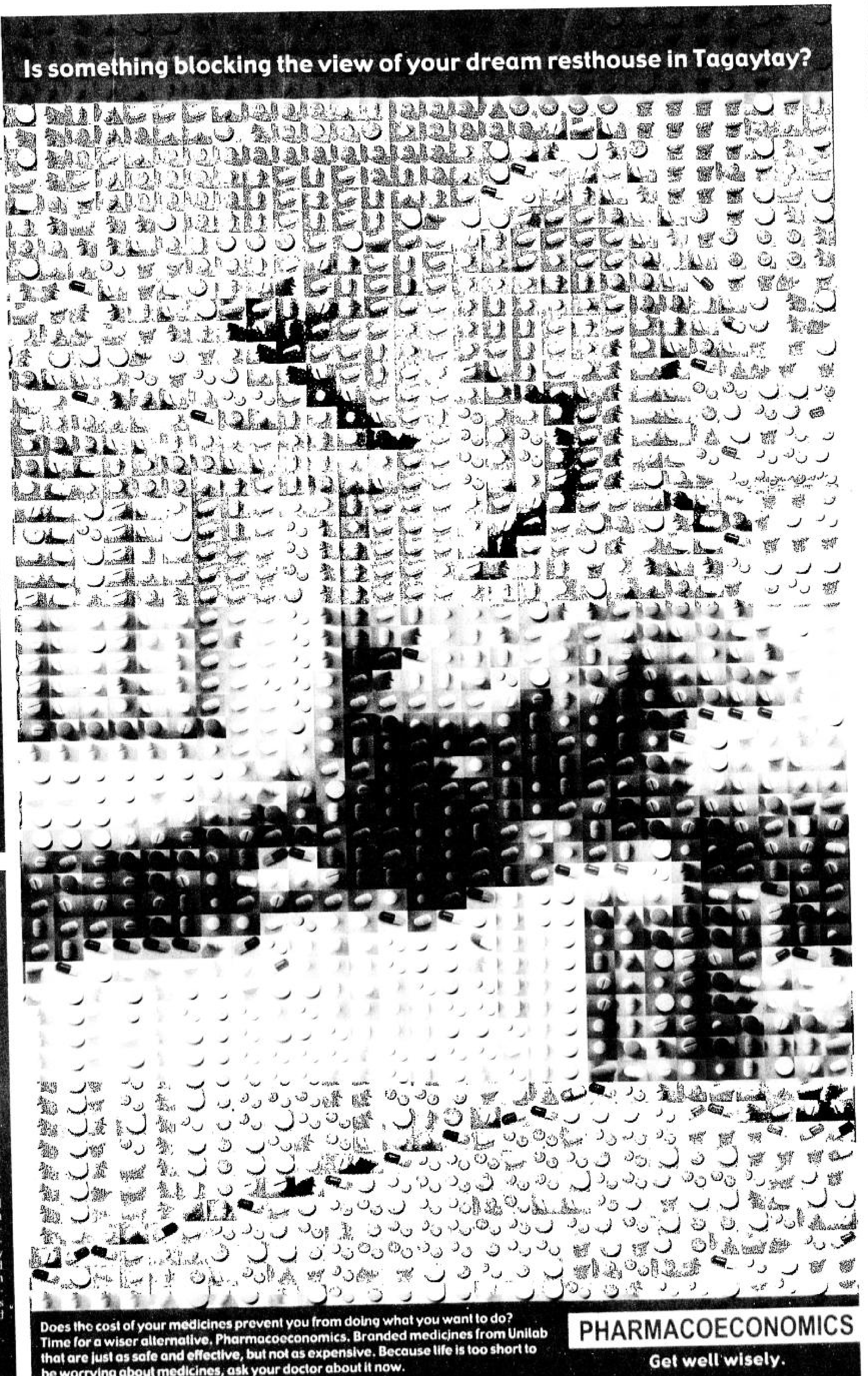
DTI has always held the AdBoard in high esteem because of its professionalism and dynamism as an organization, guided by its unwavering commitment to observe truth in advertising; to its social, economic, and cultural responsibility; and to its role in helping foster public confidence in advertising as a legitimate marketing activity. Its "Paggalang sa Mamimili" (Respect for the Consumer) campaign is highly commendable and runs parallel to DTI's mandate to protect the buying public.

I am confident that the AdBoard shall continue to effectively enforce its own Code of Ethics and promote the advertising industry's development through self-regulation, in harmony with industry goals. I fervently wish that the AdBoard remains the bastion of decency and truth and becomes the role model for other organizations in implementing projects geared towards consumer welfare and protection.

Together, let us intensify our partnership towards national progress.

Mabuhay!

PETER B. FAVILA
Secretary
Department of Trade and Industry


Is something blocking the view of your dream resthouse in Tagaytay?

Does the cost of your medicines prevent you from doing what you want to do? Time for a wiser alternative. Pharmacoeconomics. Branded medicines from Unilab that are just as safe and effective, but not as expensive. Because life is too short to be worrying about medicines, ask your doctor about it now.

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AdBoard Vision

We are the voice of the Philippine advertising industry.
The pivotal force of a dynamic, prosperous,
and responsible industry.

Mission

- We recognize self-regulation as the cornerstone of our existence
- We uphold the highest standards of fair play and professional ethics
- We foster harmony among our members
- We safeguard the interest of consumers through truthful & responsible advertising
- We create the environment where world class advertising flourishes

THE EXECUTIVE Committee, from left, vice chair Carlo S. Llave, corporate secretary Vivian Y. Tin, chair Ma. Teresa D. Villanueva, PR and information officer Lucien C. Dy Tioco, and treasurer Edgar M. Navalta

ADBOARD

INDUCTION OF THE 2006 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

February 28, 2006/12:00 Noon/
New World Renaissance Hotel

PROGRAMME

I. Invocation
KATRIELLE YZELLA A. LLAVE

II. Philippine National Anthem

III. Welcome Remarks and
Acknowledgement of Guests
VIVIAN Y. TIN
Corporate Secretary

IV. LUNCH

V. Induction of the Board
of Directors for Year 2006
FR. CARMELO A. CALUAG II

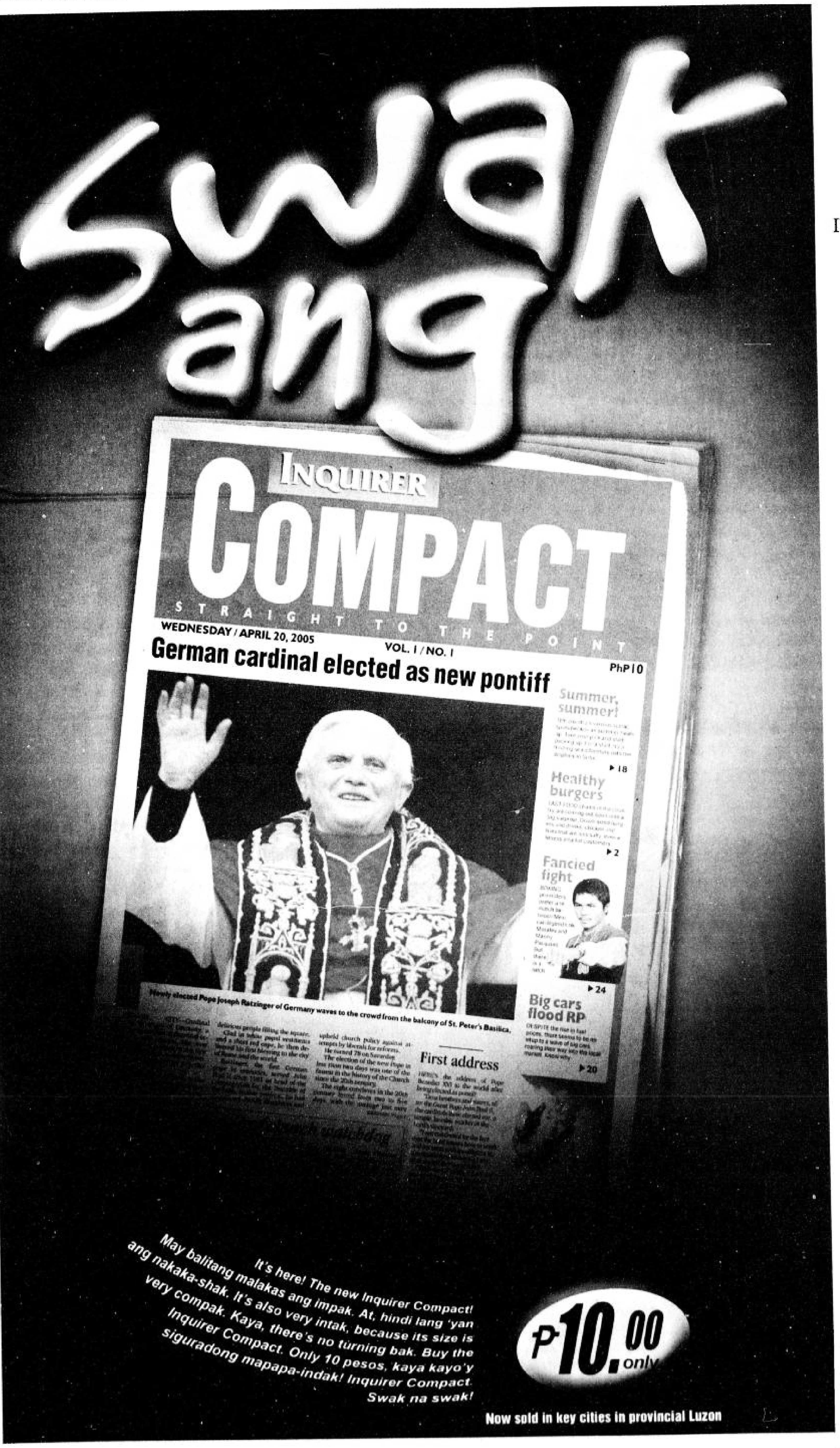
VI. Acceptance Speech of the
2006 AdBoard Chairman
MA. TERESA D. VILLANUEVA

VII. Introduction of Guest Speaker
MA. TERESA D. VILLANUEVA

VIII. Address of Guest Speaker
FR. CARMELO A. CALUAG II

IX. Presentation of Gift/Plaque of
Appreciation to:
1. Fr. Carmelo A. Caluag II
Inducting Officer/Guest Speaker
2. Raul S. Alvarez, 2005 Chairman
MA. TERESA D. VILLANUEVA
and VIVIAN Y. TIN

X. Closing Remarks
CARLO S. LLAVE
Vice-Chairman



Swak ang
INQUIRER
COMPACT
STRAIGHT TO THE POINT
WEDNESDAY / APRIL 20, 2005
VOL. I / NO. I
German cardinal elected as new pontiff
PhP10
Summer, summer!
▸ 18
Healthy burgers
▸ 2
Fancied fight
▸ 24
Big cars flood RP
▸ 20
First address
Newly elected Pope Joseph Ratzinger of Germany waves to the crowd from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica.
₱10.00 only

It's here! The new Inquirer Compact! May balitang malakas ang impak. At, hindi lang 'yan ang nakaka-shak. It's also very intak, because its size is very compak. Kaya, there's no turning bak. Buy the Inquirer Compact. Only 10 pesos, kaya kayo'y siguradong mapapa-indak! Inquirer Compact. Swak na swak!

Now sold in key cities in provincial Luzon

ADBOARD

2006 AdBoard Officers and Board of Directors

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Senior Executive Officer
Jimenez Basic Advertising

Vice-Chairman
CARLO S. LLAVE
President & General Manager
The Fourth Dimension, Inc.

Treasurer
EDGAR M. NAVALTA
President
Advertising Suppliers
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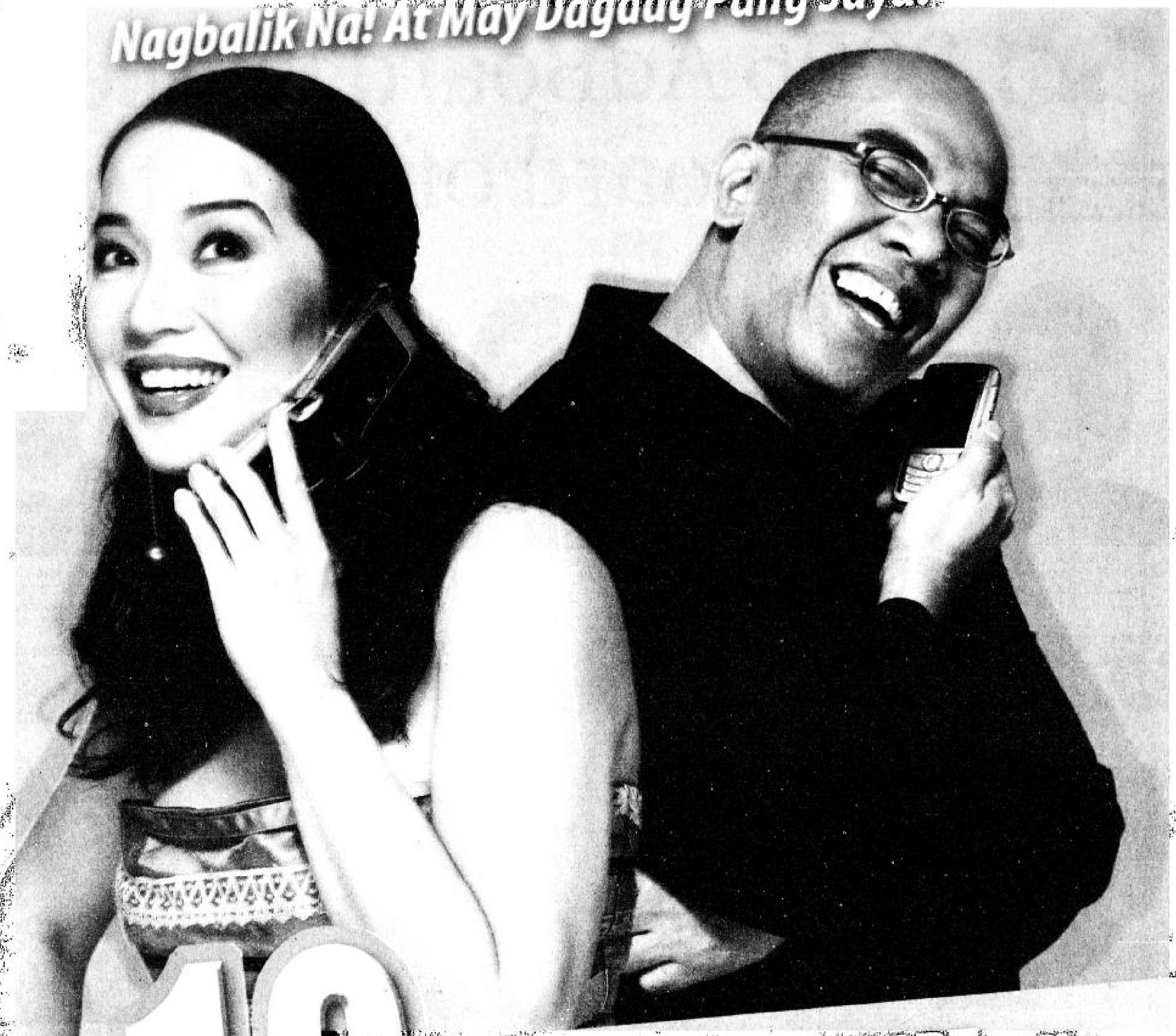
Nagbalik Na! At May Dagdag Pang Saya!



P10 for SMART to SMART calls up to 3 minutes or up to 5 minutes for only P15!

To make a SMART to SMART FLATRATE call.

Just dial *883 plus the number you're calling

*883
09201234567

Tuloy pa rin ang panalo sa tipid! Ngayon, may chance ka pang manalo kada-tawag!

Register now para makasali at maka-earn ng raffle entries! Text **CALL REG <name*address>** and send to **299**

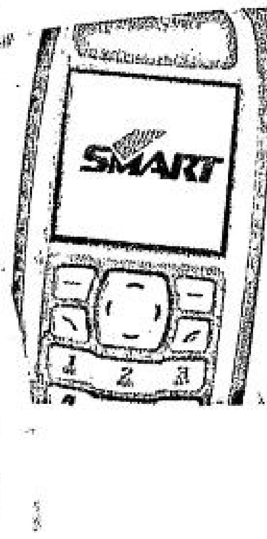
Text
CALL REG
Juan Manalang*
16 Sukat St.
Parañaque City
and send to **299**

For every	Amount	Raffle Entry
1 sec up to 3 mins.	P10 flatrate calls	1 raffle entry
3.01 mins. up to 5 mins.	P15 flatrate calls	2 raffle entries

Kaya, tawag lang ng tawag. Because the more calls you make, the more entries you get, the more chances of winning!

P100,000 pesos

- **P100,000 cash *Weekly*** *(3 winners)*



- ***P1,000 worth of Airtime Daily*** *(250 winners)*

- ***Toyota Fortuner sa Grand Draw*** *(1 winner)*

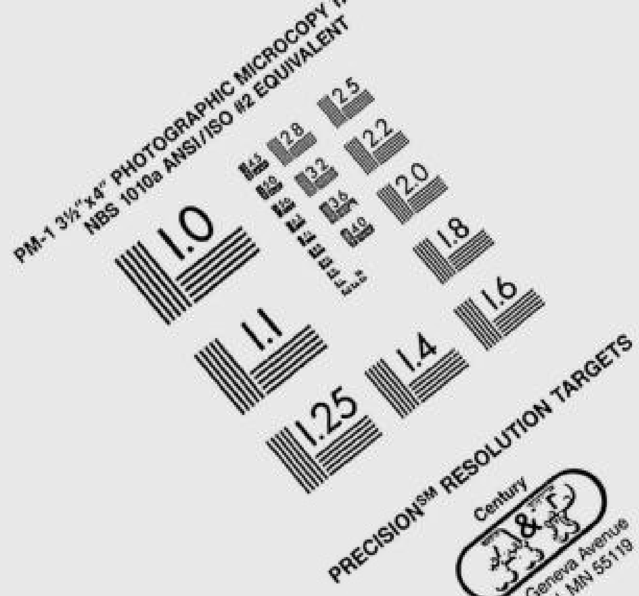
Note: Actual car may differ from photo shown.

Available to:

Open to all SMART Prepaid & Talk 'N Text subscribers with a balance of P10 up. Calls shall automatically be cut off after 5 minutes. To make another call, simply dial again. Available to all SMART network. Not aplicable to international calls.

SMART
Simply Amazing!

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1037, Series of 2006
Promo runs until March 12, 2006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PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
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PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS

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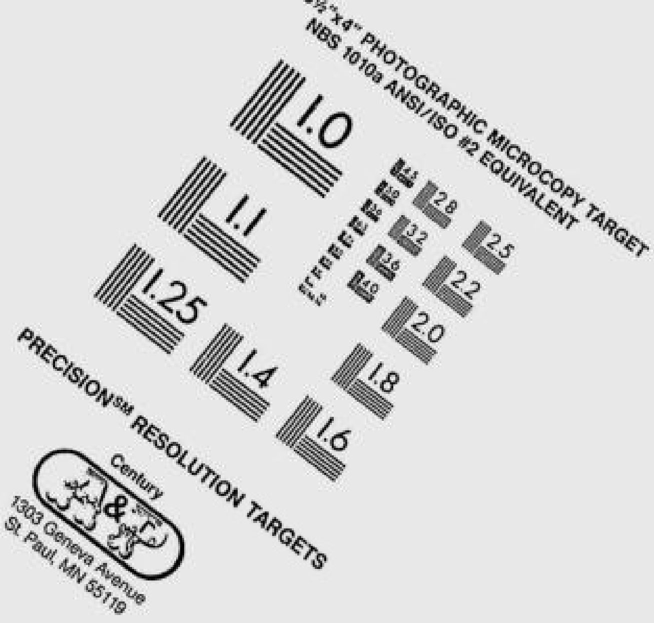
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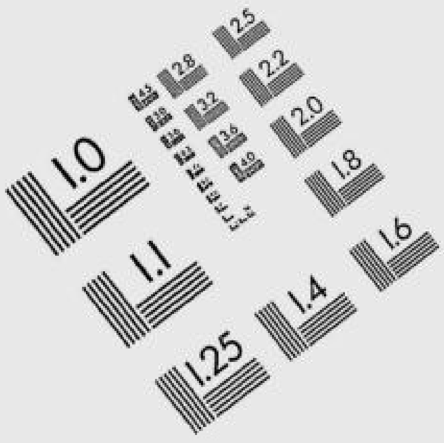
IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (MT-3)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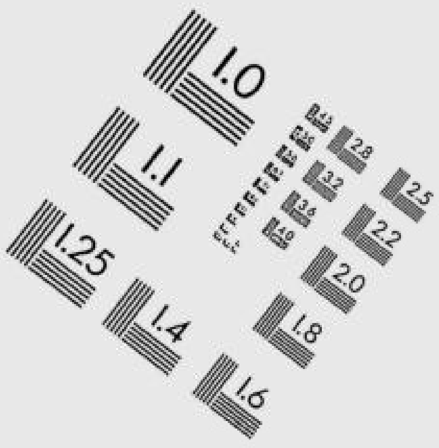
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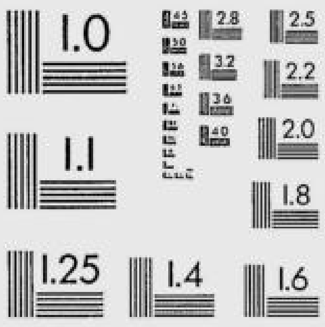
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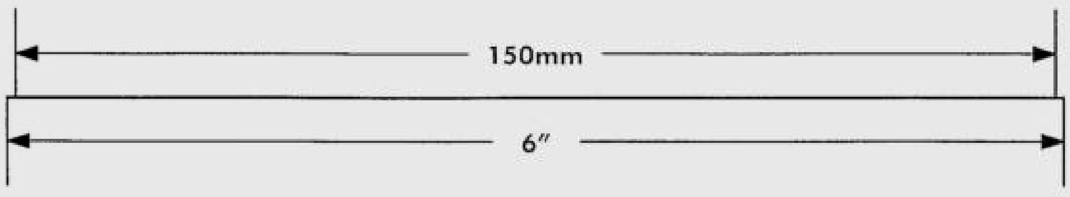

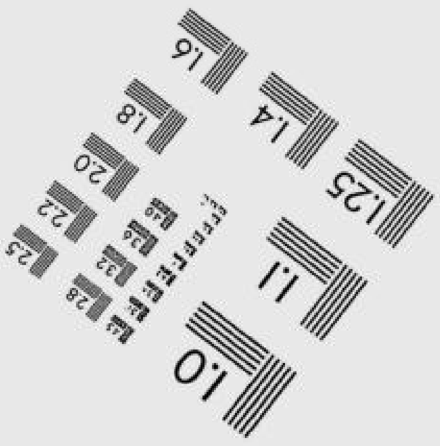
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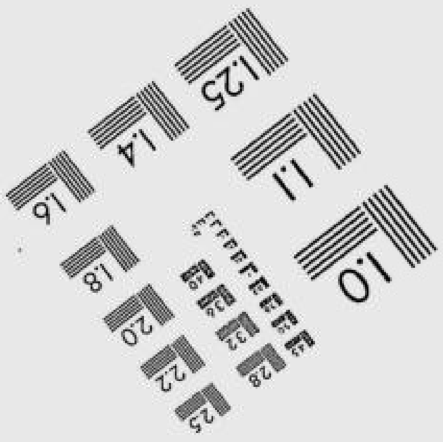
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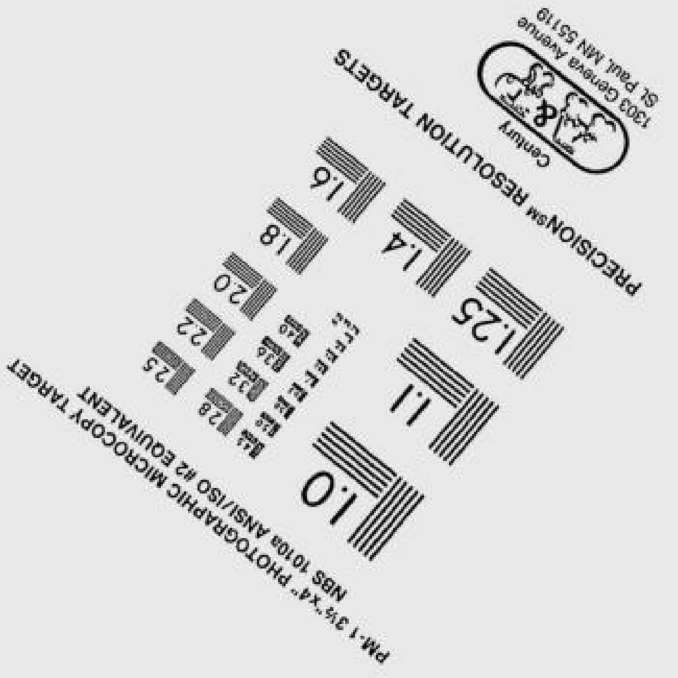
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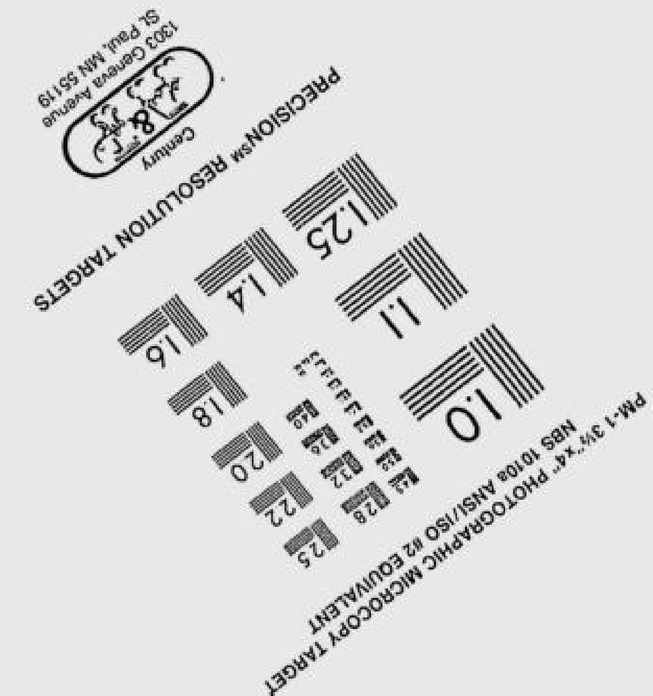
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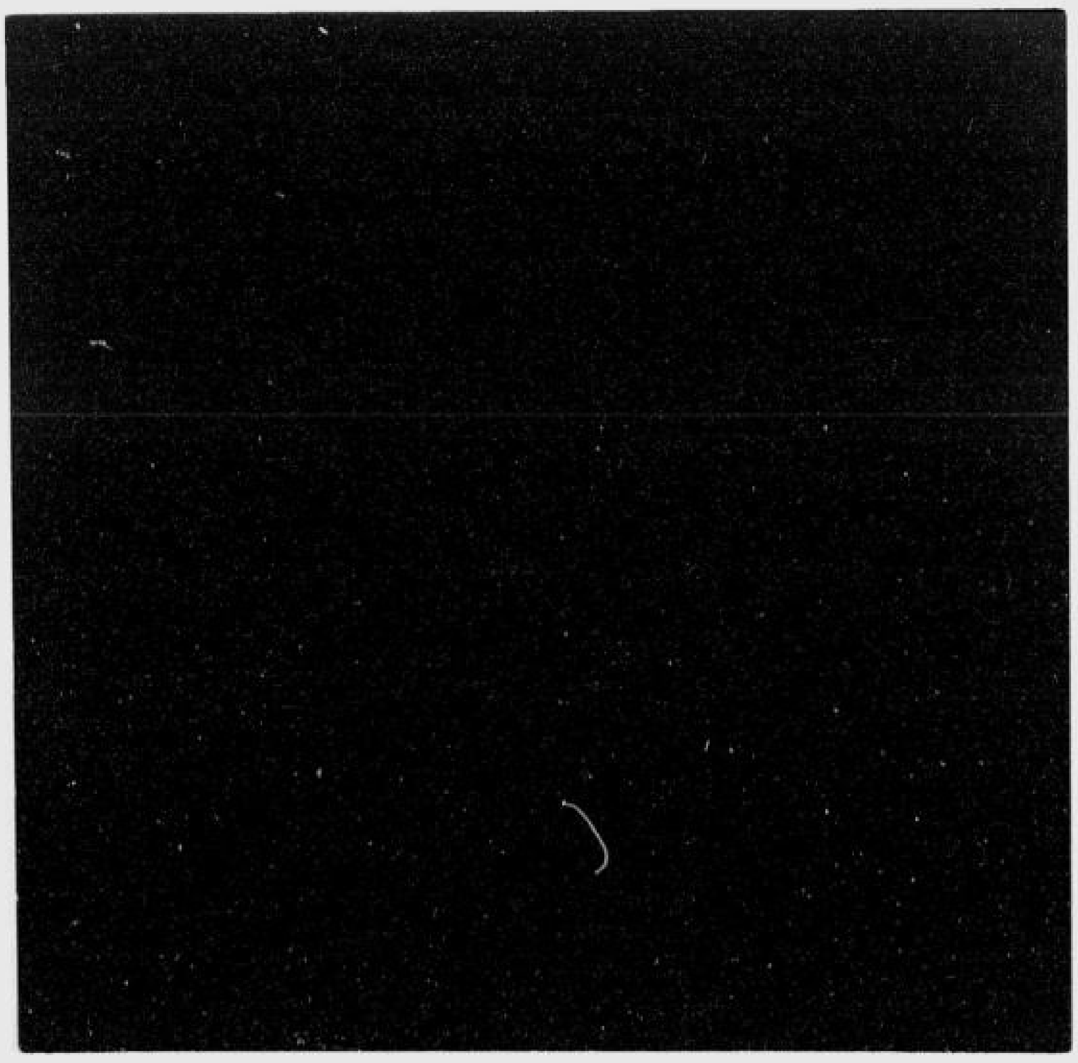

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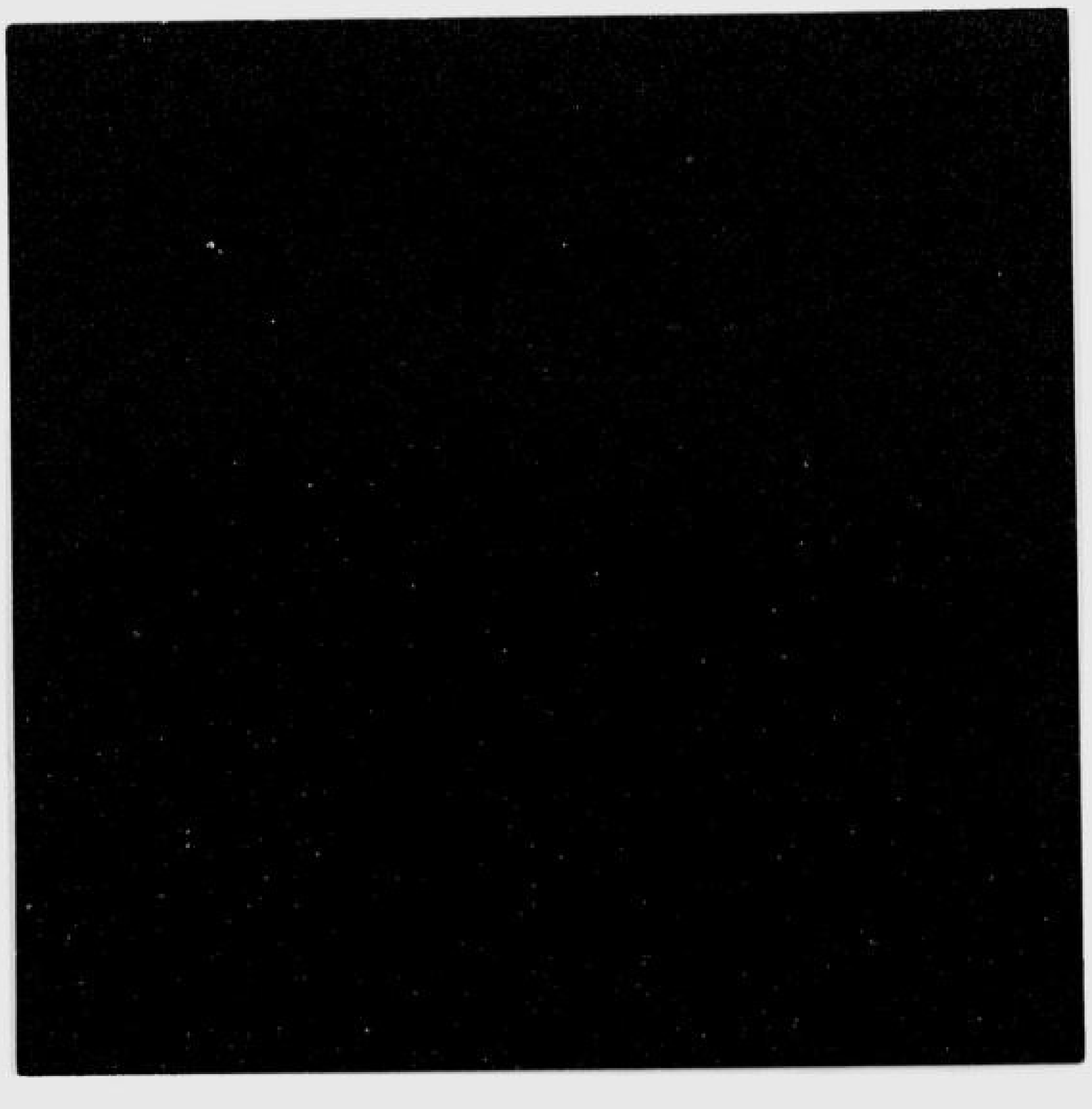

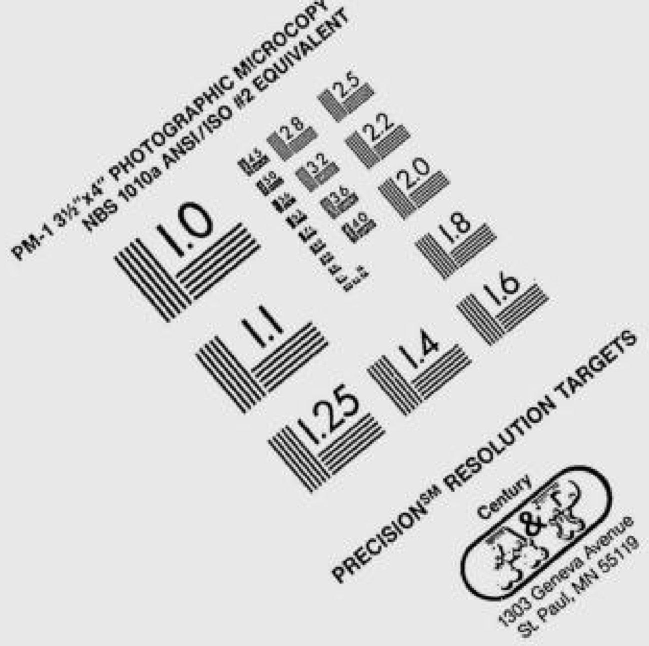
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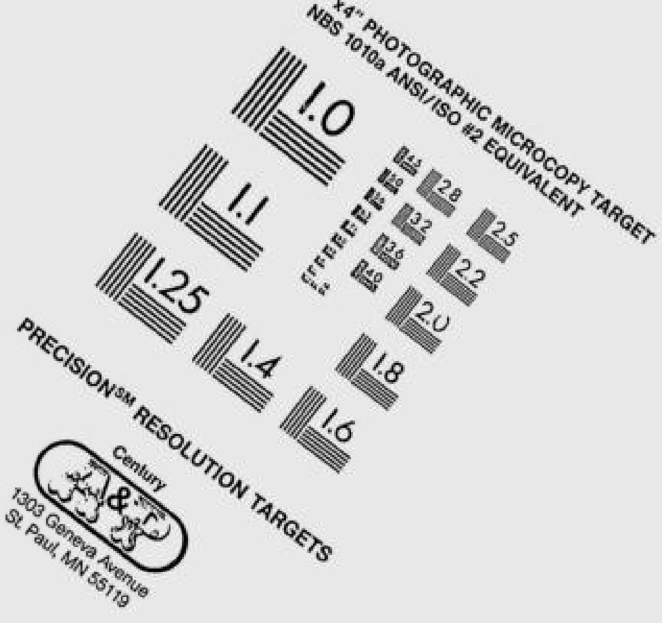
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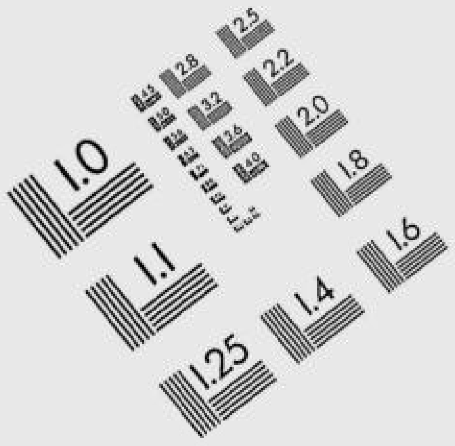

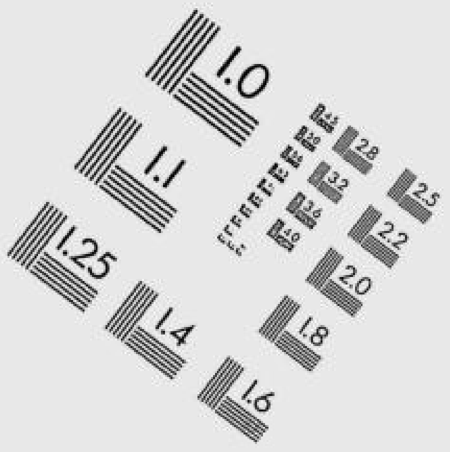

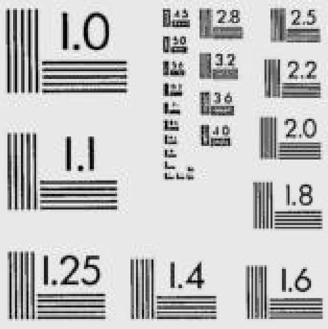

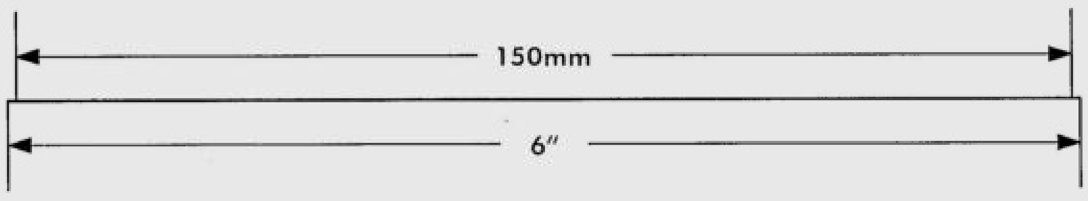

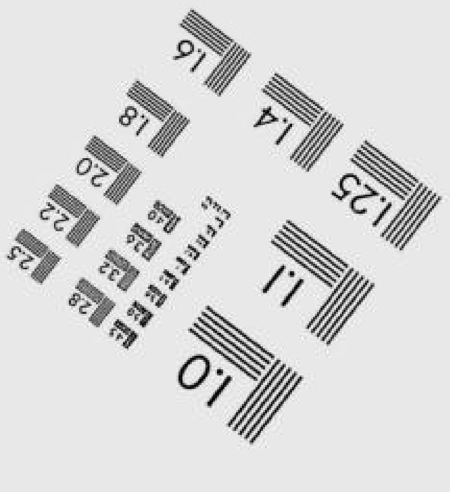

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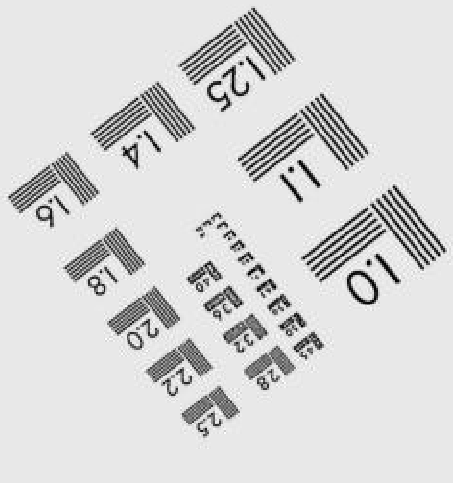

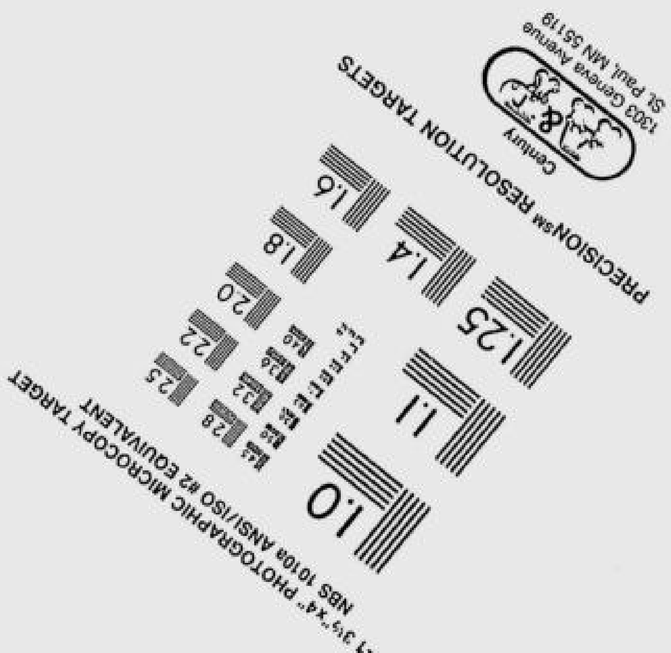
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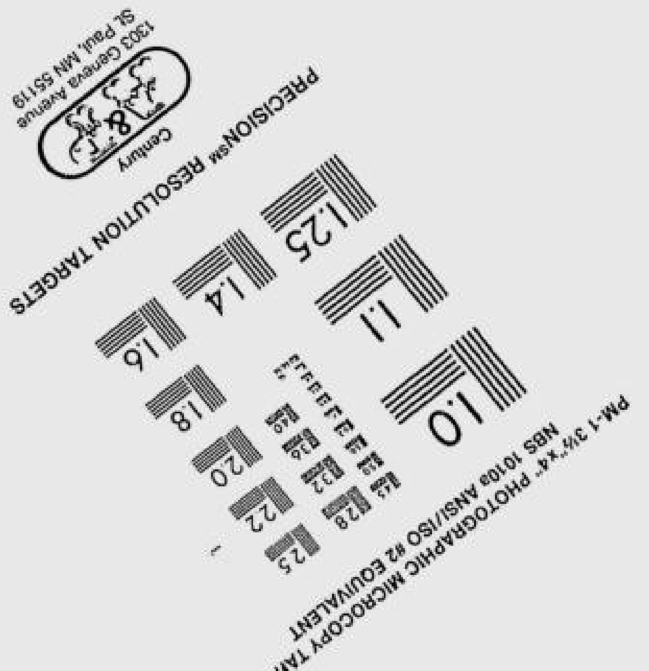
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